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# THE TRAGEDY OF A NATION

Germany 1918-1934



THE  
TRAGEDY OF A NATION

Germany 1918-1934

*by*

Prince Hubertus  
Loewenstein -

*with an introduction by*

Wickham Steed

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1934



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## Introduction by Wickham Steed

If Prince Hubertus Loewenstein, the author of this singularly interesting book, is typical of the younger generation of his fellow countrymen, there may be hope for Germany and for Europe. Yet English readers are entitled, indeed are bound, to ask how far the ideas he strives to express, and his outlook upon things national and international, can safely be taken as representing the thought and feeling of German youth and as foreshadowing the course Germany would take were her people free to take it.

To such enquiry there is no present answer. Prince Loewenstein writes of the past, albeit the comparatively recent past, and can scarcely portray the future otherwise than through criticism of what was, of what now is and suggestion of what might be under other conditions. Between the past he tells of and the future he aspires to stands National Socialist or Hitlerite Germany. Hitlerism fills the foreground. This is no reason why enquirers into its character, as a political phenomenon, and those who would fain divine its future should not try to discern in the background something greater and saner than the compound of aberrations that forms the working creed of the Third Reich.

Prince Loewenstein is too young to have known the pre-war world, or even pre-war Germany, for he was

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born in October 1906 and was barely twelve when the War ended. Not till the summer of 1924 did he leave school; and, after studying law and constitutional jurisprudence at Munich, Hamburg, Geneva and Berlin, he took his degree in February 1931. Thus his political judgement may not yet be ripe. On the other hand, his very youth, and his activity as a Youth leader in Republican Germany, enable him to speak with knowledge of the feelings and aspirations of young Germans of his own age. What he and his friends tried to do in July, 1932, after the dismissal of Dr. Brüning from the Chancellorship and the appointment of Herr von Papen to it, is set forth in Chapter VII: "The Battle of the Marne of the Weimar Republic, The 20th of July, 1932". The story shows, perhaps more clearly than its author realizes, how feckless had been and were the men who established the German Republic at Weimar in November, 1918, without laying its foundations deep and sure or troubling earnestly to defend it against the myriad foes whom they left in almost undisturbed possession of its citadel.

Last summer one of these men, in exile, confessed to a political exile from another land that their thoughtlessness had been due to the idea of revenge which obsessed their minds. Therefore they neglected to remove the old officials, the members of the Prussian military caste, and many others who had no love either for the Republic or for a democratic constitution.

These men may not have aimed at the recovery of this or that precise portion of former German territory quite in the way that many Frenchmen longed to

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win back Alsace-Lorraine after 1871. Their objects were rather national rehabilitation, release from the harsher terms of the Versailles Treaty, and the extraction from its makers, by passive resistance or positive pressure, of such concessions as might serve to strengthen Germany's position and to salve the incurable wound to her national pride which defeat and its consequences had inflicted. Motives like these certainly inspired many of them, as they afterwards inspired the late Dr. Stresemann.

Nor were these motives unnatural. They were a logical sequel to the political outlook of pre-war Germany with its effective pan-Germanism, its officially accredited pretence that envious foreign States were wrongfully denying to the German Empire its rightful "place in the sun" and that, to this end, they had conspired to "encircle" it. This legend, no less a legend than the Nordic or "Aryan" myth by which Herr Hitler and his followers have sedulously fostered German racial self-conceit, helped to persuade pre-war Germans that, by invading Belgium, their country was "hacking its way through" a ring of foes. Of the means adopted by the Imperial Government to secure from Great Britain, in 1912 and 1913, ample concessions to German demands, the "Men of Weimar" knew little, just as little as they were aware of the conclusions which that Government drew from these proofs of British goodwill—that on no account would Great Britain take part in a European conflict. The German Diplomatic Documents had not then been published, and the Austro-Hungarian Documents—which reveal Germany's insistence at

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Vienna in the summer of 1914 that "preventive war" should be waged forthwith, since British neutrality was assured—had not yet seen the light.

The only policy that could have given strength and permanence to the Weimar Republic would have been a firm resolve on the part of its founders to have done with the past, to accept even the military conditions of the Versailles Treaty as a blessing in disguise, and to set their minds and their hands to the task of making Germany a centre of attraction to all men and peoples of goodwill in a Europe deliberately warless—such a Europe as Germany alone would then have had it in her power to create and to lead.

Well do I remember the astonishment of the late Dr. Stresemann when, in September 1926, after the admission of Germany to the League of Nations, I laid this conception before him. Had it been utterly fantastic and Utopian he could hardly have been more bewildered; and never again was it possible to discuss it with him. Why he could not understand it his "Testament" and his memoranda to the ex-Crown Prince abundantly show. He thought a hand-to-mouth policy, including partial and tactical "fulfilment" of the Versailles Treaty as a basis for "petty-fogging", or *finassieren*, preferable to a lofty and far-sighted vision of Germany's future. Yet to Hitler and his associates even Stresemann's policy seemed sheer "treason". Their "Aryan" propaganda and passionate denials of any German "war guilt", their asseverations that Germany had only lost the War because she had been stabbed in the back by Jews and Marxists, responded more closely to the popular feeling which

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the founders of the Republic had themselves helped to foster. As Mr. Edgar Ansel Mowrer points out in his perspicacious work *Germany Puts the Clock Back*:

“Modern Germany really dates from the World War, in losing which Germany, unlike the victorious countries, had an opportunity to achieve historical leadership through self-renewal—and missed the chance. Then was the moment to have realized the subsequent demand of Hitler—‘Everything must be different!’ Instead of limping compromise between the former Prussian autocracy and the somewhat shop-worn Parliamentary democracy of the West, it was not beyond the capacity of the German genius to have evolved a new kind of democracy, successfully combining the historical claim for more concentrated efficiency with a none the less genuine expression of the popular will. . . . For such a revolution the Germans were emotionally ready, but intellectually unripe. . . . The fact was that, with the possible exception of Japan, the entire civilized world had outgrown the Prussian conception of society.

“Yet, in the name of this conception, the Germans had fought the War that first really made a nation of them. Therefore—they reasoned—something of the medieval German and autocratic Prussian traditions must be carried over into the new State. Herein lay the defects of the Weimar Republic. It offered little or nothing which could not conceivably have been reached under a modified Imperial Monarchy. Even its incipient Socialism was of the ‘scientific’ dogmatical variety which could not conceivably inspire an intellectually opulent nation. Therefore any number

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of eager young people got the impression that the revolution—at least, the ‘real revolution’—was still to come. Clever reactionary demagogues had, during the economic depression, little difficulty in persuading them that what they wanted was a ‘Third Empire’ which, when closely scrutinized, would be strangely similar to the glorious past. . . . Not mere servility, but knowledge of their essentially dispersive nature made the Germans hanker after heavy governmental yoke, without which the people almost inevitably swung from extreme to extreme. It was not Imperialistic scheming but vanity amounting almost to a vital need that caused the people to deny reality in the form of its own war responsibility and defeat. What to foreigners seemed wrongheadedness or sheer duplicity was mere incapacity to face a truth incompatible with the national self-esteem.”

Are there in Prince Loewenstein’s pages any grounds to believe that the youth of Germany today would, were it freed from National Socialist “totalitarian” rule, be capable not only of comprehending but of seizing the opportunity which the Men of Weimar missed? The chief interest of what he has written consists in the light it throws upon this question—a question which his readers must answer for themselves. He says, indeed, that “all depends on making preparations now for the spirit that must ultimately prevail if Europe is to be saved from the abyss”; and it may well be that the exile from Germany of so many of her sons, whose only crime is their reluctance to succumb to Hitlerite hypnotism, may in time enable a nucleus of Germans to see their own country’s

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past and to descry its future in ways more helpful than those of the half-hearted founders of the Republic.

Meanwhile the fact must be faced, a fact which Prince Loewenstein clearly brings out, that a "magician" like Adolf Hitler, "a man with so little personality and so few creative possibilities", has acquired absolute leadership of the German people. In this Prince Loewenstein sees the "tragedy of a nation". The non-German world is, however, confronted with the anxious problem whether the German tragedy must needs involve other peoples before it is played out to a catastrophic end. In his final chapter Prince Loewenstein declares that "there is nothing else in the Hitler movement than the desire for absolute power for power's sake"; and he wishes all who have dealings with Germany to remember this truth. It follows that weak concessions to Hitlerism should be firmly eschewed lest the appetite of the Third Reich, like that of the former German Empire, grow by what it feeds on. By withholding such concessions foreign countries may be able to render some negative service to the German people. None the less it remains true that the German people must work out their own salvation; and in estimating the chances of their doing so it would be foolish to overlook the hint, given by the Berlin correspondent of *The Times* on 30 January, 1934, that the Hitlerite Third Reich may be more nearly akin to the real Germany than the Weimar Republic was or could be. He wrote:

"For fourteen experimental years after the last war the average visitor, on entering Germany, marked no drastic transition from the realm of Western demo-



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cracy. It is one of the achievements of Dr. Goebbels's great propagandist apparatus that many travellers do not notice the transition today. But the experiment failed; even the varnish [upon the Weimar Republic] had not set. The new Germany, which the Nazis proclaim to be the real Germany, is something different. It is not Oriental; it is not, though sharing features, another Soviet Russia. It is the spiritual area, predominantly, of a people who have not yet passed through stages which the Western countries have left behind. It is young, vigorous, tribally martial in spirit, and proud of it. There is a transition at the frontier, and it will inevitably become more marked."

This is the real issue. If the German people, the young and the less young, "have not yet passed through stages which the Western countries have left behind", can they pass or be guided through those stages before they bring further disaster upon Europe and the world? If they cannot, the tragedy of Germany may become the tragedy of a Continent and of Western civilization. Prince Loewenstein helps non-Germans to understand how the founders of the Weimar Republic missed their chance. In view of their character and antecedents, and of the retarded development of their people, they could hardly have grasped it. Soon or late the opportunity may recur; and the truly fateful question for Germany and for Europe is whether the younger generation to which Prince Loewenstein belongs will be fit and able to take it when it comes.

WICKHAM STEED

LONDON, *February*, 1934

## Author's Preface

**I**t is not a historical book, in the true sense of the word, that here is brought before the public, for in it there is found no continuous narration of the outer events that happened in post-war Germany. Rather has an effort been made to depict in a series of images, in close connection one with another, the spiritual tragedy in which the German people still live. Neither was there any intention to represent one single party as the only guilty one, or to burden it with all the ill-boding occurrences that nowadays are noticeable in Germany. For we were aware that we here deal with events in which all bear a share, who until now had any political or spiritual influence.

To those who view Germany from outside and who, because of what is happening there, have utterly lost faith in her, it must be said that Germany's condition cannot be judged by standards that may be appropriate enough to other countries. Whoever reads this book, above all the Englishman who reads it in an English translation, must bear this in mind; and if he cannot understand this out of his own intuition, he must at least accept as a fact, what we here try to explain: that in the same way as a human being at his birth carries his whole personality fully

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complete within him, and as all education is merely development, rather than any addition to what the soul already contained, so it is with a people.

The Germany of the twentieth century, with all her technique and her industry, with her philosophy and her most perfected thought training, at heart has remained the country she always was, full of wonder and mystery, the country in which fairy tales and legends have real power, and where a song and a symbol carry greater weight than the most logical arguments. Germany is still the child among nations, as Heinrich Heine sang of it; still the soul of this country loves bright images and dreams, believes and hopes, is strong and courageous, fearsome and timid as only children are. Therefore it is so difficult to speak to other nations about the image of real Germany, for even her language is not completed yet; it is alive and can still be moulded, and every new occurrence still must adapt itself, as in earliest childhood we give new names to unknown things that meet us for the first time. Many words that have infinite significance for Germany can therefore be translated only approximately.

The word *Reich*, for example, can hardly be adequately rendered by any single expression. Neither "realm" nor "empire" is exactly identical, for the *Reich* is a mystic community, universal as ordained by cult and destiny, and though it might become a political reality also, it does not find its ultimate end in this. A similar case occurs, when in a German text the word "German" is used by itself. Then it indi-

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cates not only something by which it is different from other nations, but it is a world of its own, in which experiences and sensations, common to all, are reflected. Neither have I found in any other language a word absolutely identical with the German conception of *Raum*. The *Raum* is not only a period of time or a geographical demarcation—it sometimes is the equivalent for the inmost soul of a whole world of civilization and culture.

These are a few examples only; but perhaps they will suffice to show how difficult it is to come to a real understanding of Germany. And yet it has to be understood by all, to whom the destiny of Europe, of the *Abendland* (land of the setting sun), as the more powerful German expression is, means anything. For without Germany, the most vital, and in all its chaos and wretchedness perhaps the strongest country yet, a reconstruction of our continent is out of the question. This acknowledgement is nowadays more or less shared by all, and therefore I hope it will not be considered as arrogance, when I, as a German, openly profess it. That is the reason also why the interest of the whole world is turned towards Germany and why in all languages of the earth more books are being written about this country than about all the others together.

I have tried in this volume to choose a form which I hope will bring events together in a more readily comprehensible connection. The book is divided into two parts: the first shows Germany as after the revolution of 1918 it came into being and as it was

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till its overthrow by the National Socialist party in the spring of 1933: the second is intended to throw light on the most essential features which National Socialist Germany displays.

A separate chapter between the first and the second part is concerned with the twentieth of July, 1932, as this day is the turning point between two historical epochs; but the two parts of the book must not be regarded as completely disconnected one from the other. As an effort has been made to show how the Weimar Republic from the hour of her birth was dependent on her opponents, the first part is already thickly interwoven with many things that only in the second part are described in full detail. And in the latter, ideas are echoed, which are taken from the first and which as such have nothing whatever to do with National Socialism. This was done on purpose, as I did not wish to stop at an outward description of National Socialism. Who wants that, should read the daily newspapers and the annual statistical records. To me it seemed of greater importance, together with a description of outer events, to offer some theories of general validity, by which National Socialism and the Weimar Republic must be judged, if the world is even at the present time in some measure to understand that other Germany, that will only fully reveal itself in years to come.

It may be that many things written in this book will appear strange to the outsider. Perhaps he will even speak of a romanticism far removed from any reality, and having but little in common with the existing

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manifestation of power. Such objections are not new to me, and therefore I have said that it is only possible to understand Germany if it is allowed to reveal itself to one as a country in which there are giants and dwarfs, demons and benign spirits and many other powers, that in the soul of other nations have sunk far deeper into subconsciousness. And those, to whom this explanation is not sufficient either, may accept as a matter-of-fact proof of the truth of these words, with what fantastic methods, unlike anything that ever was taken seriously by other countries, the Weimar Republic was overthrown; and such will realize, furthermore, that the present rulers of Germany have founded their power on words and ideas that would not have had any psychological effect anywhere else. The purpose of this book therefore is to show, to everyone interested in European problems, a side of Germany which up to now was too little heeded—and perhaps this is the real “Tragedy of a Nation”, that until now she herself was not able to discern where her significance and true vocation really lie.



## *Part I*





## *Chapter I*

### Germany and the Great War

A book that deals with the tragedy of the German people has of necessity to begin with the tremendous event, by which the fate of a whole world was profoundly influenced—with the Great War and with all that in human recollection it will for ever recall. It is the line of division which separates two historical periods and no passage of the years will suffice to wipe out the traces thereof. More especially for Germany, that in the heart of Europe had to fight against two thirds of the world, it is a landmark which compels everyone to take a definite side. Not that it is my intention here to write a history of that war, for I will not speak of the war itself, but only of what was made of it at the hands of the German people and her representatives. Others, with a greater right than I, have described the horrors of its battles, and they have omitted nothing of all the hope and the faith, the disillusion and misery, that in the years of 1914-1918, and after the return home from the battlefield, was in store for the people. They have depicted the scenes of slaughter, that had nothing whatever to do with former romanticism, they have spoken of the joyful marching-out of 1914, of encounters with the

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enemy, and of the love for people and fatherland, which held the worn-out troops together, till the leadership broke down and carried everything along with it. We, who took no actual part in the campaign, must rely on what has been told us, and we shall attempt nothing that for us would have to be derived from the bulletins of war or from the personal experiences of others. We can only judge of it as is befitting our years, and as our duty demands, for to us falls the task of taking over the inheritance of the war generation. Besides, at the time, the war was felt by us in person, though we were only children then. We had to go through all the misery of the country; we learnt what hunger and cold meant, and we had known many, who never came back, or came as cripples only. So in our consciousness also it was branded that two millions of our countrymen had died for Germany. The girdle of graves, erected round about her frontiers, has thrown its fatal fetters round us too, and we have to investigate and come to a conclusion—more so perhaps than if we had really been present at its battles.

Profoundly I realized this unbroken union with our dead when, in the summer of 1933, I drove through the lines that from the Swiss frontier to the sea denote the ground on which the battles were fought. The view of the French and Flemish battlefields formed the last clue, for me, to what for more than a decade has concerned Germany: the fulfilment of the inner meaning of the Great War, on which fulfilment every political reconstruction of the country is dependent.

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Still deeply upset by all that during the spring of 1933 I had witnessed in Germany, I passed through the recent war territory, and I saw the soil round Verdun, unfertile even now, the withered meadows, the new, whitewashed houses, and the stunted, crippled woods. On one of the hottest days of July I was there, and yet I felt cold, when I saw all this and the endless graveyards that are spread all over the country. The idea of this book for the first time then took shape, and after having read in the following months many peace orations, and having heard still more of rearmament, at the end of November 1933 I came back to the same country. It was on my return home from England, where I had spoken with many, of whom only a few were willing to realize how near the danger of a second European war had drawn, and how all depended on seeing Germany as it really is, not only with a view to the situation, as it shows itself at present, but also to the possibilities of future development. Damp fog was everywhere around me and in my mind I heard the warning that comes forth from the tombs of my countrymen. Such tremendous sacrifices have been made, and if we, who are young, still are allowed to live and work, it is to them that we owe such permission. But where is the equivalent for all this blood, what deed has the German people done to justify its being spilt? It is a German who puts this question, one who, out of his love for freedom and for his country, has to live beyond the borders, now that new prohibitions have been imposed upon Germany. And yet I did not feel

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an exile in my own eyes, but one whose duty it was to find an answer. For all those, resting under the crosses, round Verdun and St. Mihiel, at Chemin des Dames and Ypres, and the others whose bodies were so mutilated that no grave was possible for them, and all who are lying under the sands of Arabia and Africa and at the bottom of the sea, they still await the justification of their death. All of them did not die out of an abstract sense of duty, or in order to bring back everything that had driven them to their death. They were led by the spirit of a whole people, they have sacrificed themselves, to give their life-blood to its waning power.

All of them, however feeble and but half known to themselves, had yearned for a new *Reich*, which they had hoped to conquer for all who were young or as yet unborn. They had thrown themselves into the struggle, to win for the coming generations a just and duly secured heritage. With them a treasure was entrusted to the earth, and those who thus sacrificed themselves expected that the whole nation would unite in order to save it. But nothing of all this happened, and perhaps after all it is best that it still lies buried and unclaimed. For during the earlier period, misunderstanding pacifists and university apostles tried to tear away the people from all that united them to their dead. They were of opinion that the latter should be left to their fate and cut off from all influence over the living, for they were erroneously suspected of provoking new war impulses.

The war had to be forgotten and wiped out, no-

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thing was to remind us of it any longer, and from its end German history must begin again. This was a fatal error, for whatever one may think of the war, it was a fact, which did not occur haphazard or disconnected from the corporate life of the nation. It is flesh of their flesh, and blood of their blood, which it devoured wantonly, and such an epoch cannot be simply ignored. For even if no book, no song should bear testimony, it continued its life in the dreams of the survivors and in the rhythm of the blood that pulsates through the young.

As it was the Weimar Republic that after the war had taken over the official representation of Germany, it would have been her duty to bear in mind that an answer was due; but, as she omitted to do this, her structure from the very beginning was erected on unstable ground, for the struggle that ended outwardly in November 1918 will continue until the last and lowest of the dead have got an answer to their question. It is said that at the battle of the Catalaunian Fields, where the power of the Huns was broken, the souls of the slain continued fighting in the clouds, to such an extent did they feel themselves champions of the cause that had driven them to their death. And so the German Republic broke down because she did not understand these inexorable laws and because she left the memory of her dead, still hovering over Germany, in the hands of people who made use of it to their own advantage.

The Weimar Republic did not know that a nation is not only built up by those forces, which for the moment

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are incorporated visibly, for between those and the others there are ties without which the present cannot be understood. Above all it is the Social Democrat party that has to bear the blame for this. It was ashamed of its love for a people divided in classes, and it had a bad conscience in that its sense of responsibility included also the non-proletarian orders. Only when it was too late did they endeavour, hesitatingly and feebly, to change their outward attitude. As an excuse for something that certainly had no need of excuses, the fact was brought forward, that of the dead in the Great War, at least one half had been Social Democrats—as if this matter would have to be judged according to party lists! With this conception the Social Democrat party showed itself to be an offspring of the same mentality as the political Right, only that the latter prospered through the faults of the Weimar Republic. As this was an utter failure in these very conclusive matters, the Right could usurp the heirloom that had been destined for the whole people, for the German Nationalists, and later on the National Socialists, began to interpret the sacrifices of the Great War as though it had been fought for a special group or party, and as if only by a second war could the first have found its fulfilment.

They began to claim the dead shieldbearers as supporters of all political and social reaction, and even called on them for testimony that Germany desired again to be the military and Junker-ridden state, without liberty, as of old. Never before in the history of the world has the most valuable treasure of a

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people been thus misused. At all memorial ceremonies, which the Weimar Republic never knew how to celebrate, it could be noticed over and over again, and we need only mention to what extent they perverted the inner meaning of the word *Langemarck*.

By this at first was commemorated the death of Germany's most promising youth. With the Deutschland Song on their lips the youngest regiments there stormed the positions of the enemy, led by no strategical necessity, by no warlike ambition, but only because they felt a yearning to give their life and because they were convinced that the nation had need of this sacrifice. And what is *Langemarck* today? A cheap stage-performance, an advertising signboard for officers on half-pay, who had stayed far behind the lines, and who think it already to be a great national asset that they themselves were not killed. And more: *Langemarck* became a psychological conjuring-trick, through which new war-enthusiasm was to be awakened in the upgrowing German youth.

It is an interpretation befitting efficient armament magnates and Nazi strategists, but it has nothing to do with the "*Stirb und Werde!*" ("Die and then rise again!"), which Goethe characterized as the preliminary for all humanity. Out of unwillingness to accept responsibility the present leaders of Germany try to persuade the people to a philosophy of chaos, and between the lines of all peace orations, destined for foreign consumption, the doctrine can be discerned that salvation lies only in a new war. They know not, or they do not want to know, that after all



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war is only a token of weakness, the bankruptcy of things spiritual, for it is a confession that all other methods have failed. No blame is hereby laid on all who, during the four years of the Great War, in every country, wrestled their way to the greatest height which man, taken either as an individual or as representative of a nation, can attain; the accusation is against those who have nothing to offer to their country but a repetition of all the horrors already seen. It is not the German people that bears the guilt, nor can it be blamed for the childishness of the methods to which it has become a victim. With military bands and regimental banners, with spirited marches "fresh and gay", with exercises of protection against gassing, and the appropriate propaganda on the wireless, a great deal can be attained everywhere, as all of us know. Even mature people, who were witness of the war, react to this, for the effect of all these methods has its origin in the psychological law, that after a time human beings are only able to remember what pleased them. That young men, to whom from their first lessons of history nothing but falsehoods were told, gradually know of no other longing than to make an end to this "sordid peace", cannot astonish us.

It has been often repeated that moral disarmament must precede physical; but nowadays in Germany we can only discern moral armament, and the Weimar Republic bears a heavy guilt for having tolerated the preparation of all this. She did it, because she was afraid of being "unpatriotic"—as if there could be a worse form of high treason than to lay founda-

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tions for a new war. We too have always held high the ideal that Germany had to be changed into a truly heroic country, but this can only mean that heroism has to take a new shape. The hero who is wanted today has no need of outward emblems of heroism, and because the slain of the Great War are united to the living, struggling part of the nation, they require their bodies, not their death.

That is a pallid pacifism, will now be said, an old wife's tale of humanity and brotherhood, whilst the others bristle with arms. And Schiller will be quoted against me, and they will think that I am discomfited by his words: "Unworthy is the land that does not blithely give all to honour." But that is the very thought that underlies the whole of this book; nor is anybody as passionately aware of the honour of the nation as we, who for the sake of Germany would live in banishment—but Germany herself is banished. For the honour of the nation, which had to be defended against the feeble Republic, against National Socialism, and against Communism, must not be degraded into a protection for those to whom the word nation only means a cheap pretext. We are aware of this honour rather in the acknowledgement that the arms of the others must not be opposed by similar arms. How concrete this policy is, is shown by the fact that every military armament, if the worst came to the worst, would lead to a dismal end. Neither today, nor for many years to come, will Germany have an opportunity of imposing her will on her neighbours by

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military means. She would only be capable of damaging tremendously herself and all around; and it is a feeble denial of the spiritual possibilities of our country if, instead of utilizing these, one dreams of military laurels and thereby believes oneself to be very national and heroic.

The heritage, which the fallen have left us, and which gives its meaning to the Great War, is the reconstruction of Germany to a social community based on freedom; and beyond that in the breaking down of all limited nationalistic barriers, and in the extension of Germany to become the receptacle of occidental universal conceptions.

All countries of the world are passing through a crisis today. With the old methods none of them can go on, and so in all of them experiments are being tried at the cost of their citizens; but as their reserve stocks have already been exhausted for a long time, they must proffer their own substance, so that in the spiritually enfeebled atmosphere of Europe the Russian conception is gaining ever more ground. This haunting ghost it is that causes one government after another to adopt methods of compulsion, by means of which they hope to hold their subjects in submission.

Only from Germany the world had expected better things, for so great had been the faith in her that subconsciously for years they had waited for the redeeming deed that might have shown the way to others. Perhaps it would have come, if at the same time in the Treaty of Versailles there had not been

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created a system that limited even the air which Germany could be allowed to breathe.

In spite of all that has happened, we ourselves believe, now as ever, that Germany is endowed with the forces needed for the continued existence of Europe. Yet these must not be used in war; for not only would it mean the annihilation of all prosperity, but in all countries the arms would be reversed and the end would be Soviet-Europe, a bond state to the enormous Asiatic continent.

For the last time, during the Great War, there was the opportunity of a military solution, but only on condition that Germany had at that time understood her mission and used her weapons to bring peace to all countries, without "annexations and contributions". But now the peace treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest have paved the road to Germany's own fate. Perhaps the endeavours of the Holy See would have been successful, if they had not been thwarted by those who believed Germany's existence dependent on the possession of the North of France and Belgium, the same who in reality are its rulers now. It is their fault that the old hostile question, "who had set the Germans as judges over other nations", was left unanswered. Had the answer then been given, the purpose of the Great War would have been fulfilled 15 or 16 years ago.

The one opportunity within a thousand years, once lost, never returns in the same form. The highest, that might now be gained, would be the atmosphere of August 1914 once again. But as the people have

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already passed through the disillusion of the struggle and the return home, and as they would recognize, after their first disenchantment, war in its true and inhuman form, we know beforehand what the result would be. It would mean the complete ruin of the country, and the death for the second time of all those slain in the Great War. Neither are these things unknown to the men at present in power, and therefore they try at least for the moment to conceal the fire, with which they are playing, by promises of an opposite effect—to which they will adhere until they think the proper hour for the accomplishment of their purposes has come.

Therefore all depends on making preparations now for the spirit that must ultimately prevail, if Europe is to be saved from the abyss. To youth, that has known its elder brothers, and to those who only know about them from what they have been told, be it said that they need not be ashamed of peaceful reconstruction, for it demands no lesser heroism; and it must be borne in mind that desire for death was never characteristic of a people at such times as they were growing strong and powerful.

The inner meaning of the Great War can therefore only be found in the victory over classes and orders, in which direction, while the war still lasted, an effort had been made. For this is the essential—not mere outward discipline, with which lower officers and sergeants at present fain would lead the politics of Germany. Of the Great War they only remember the parade-step and the brightly polished buttons, and

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they believe, if all this is brought back, it will be sufficient to have given meaning to the death of two millions of brave men.

One can understand that this mentality is supported by the men who now rule Germany, for all of them hope that in this way the people will forget their real need. Moreover they have to show their gratitude to those who helped them to attain their power, and who can follow the growing enthusiasm for war in exact figures in their profit accounts. And so in Germany the amount of ammunition is towering higher and higher, while enormous cellars are being filled with steel flasks, containing highly compressed and extremely expensive poisonous gases.

Rarely was a game so criminal as this one is: continuously and at every opportunity the necessity of armament is spoken of, and when sometimes the foreign governments pay attention, when they begin to be afraid that their own sins might bear fruit, then declarations are sent all over the world, that nobody ever loved peace as they, who for 14 years spoke of revision by violence, who rather today than tomorrow would "beat France victoriously" and "ride towards the East".

It is not the German problem only that matters here. Over all countries of Europe hover the shadows of the dead, their voice audible through the loudest peace perorations and, deep in every human heart, sounding their summons to desist before it is too late. And so it is putting the question wrongly, when even well-meaning people declare, over and over again,

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that certainly one single country cannot disarm. Some, who possess more knowledge, have given the answer that the gas war had to be changed into a spiritual war, and this is more than merely an alliteration based on the German words "*Gas und Geist*", since only by spiritual weapons can that be destroyed which was forged by war instruments, but which at our present stage of development is altogether out of date, and so the ultimate result of the Great War will be: that it is Germany's vocation to rule by a spiritual sceptre, that more urgently than ever it is her mission to bring peace to the other nations of the world, and that it has to set an example to them of how to fight Communism without imitating its methods.

In connection with this first chapter, the purpose of which is to provide a short introduction to the spiritual conceptions which the book contains, I may here mention some of the international endeavours that were the outcome of the Great War, the most essential of which, now as ever, is the League of Nations and, connected with it, international arbitration. We advance this opinion deliberately at the very moment of the greatest crisis the ideal of Geneva ever had to pass through, for if the League of Nations often has fallen below its own high standard, if it has lacked the external power which might have turned its judgements into realities, yet its significance cannot be doubted. There are thousands of cheap jokes current about the League, and all the periodicals of the Right, for many years, made profit out of these products of bad taste, issued at its cost, while

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even those of the Left gradually came to think of it as an imposing façade with nothing very solid behind—erroneously—for already its existence is of tremendous importance. For the first time in the history of nations a forum has been created before which governments can be called to account, and by which they may be found guilty—the same governments who up to now have been accustomed to regard their armaments as the only standard of right and wrong.

The importance of the League of Nations is proved by the very men themselves who have always fought against it—and that is another reason why Hitler turned his back on it—not to mention the fact that the people were in need of a new sensation.

Whether German National Socialists, French, South-American, or Japanese Nationalists—it is always the same argument that is advanced: "The sovereignty of the nation demands a departure from the League of Nations." This sovereignty, as it is conceived by people who have understood nothing of the purport of the Great War, is by no means one based on superior spiritual deeds; to them it only means a free hand to attack the sovereignty of their neighbours. All they want is to receive a solemn declaration that they are allowed to devour each other.

Now one of the most important results of the Great War is that the more sensible among the nations have realized that there are no longer any separate interests, that the welfare of all and of every one is closely connected. To fight for this axiom, based on the real interest of every single nation,



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corresponds therefore internationally to the common sacrifice which all states have made; yet we must avoid mere literal obedience to the letter. When I was in England in November 1933, I often heard it said that "all would be well, if Hitler would only return to the League of Nations". Such a step would only have importance for the pacification of Europe if with this return were combined an acceptance of the laws of international and national justice—but who can expect this?—would Hitler in such circumstances still be Hitler? To be sure, his exit from Geneva has no significance for the community of nations which, instead of acting, have begun to whimper as though in great fear; or to try, like some rejected lover, to win back her who so lately dismissed them.

It is necessary action and counteraction that we here confront: the reconstruction of Germany and the reconstruction of Europe. The misunderstanding of the purport of the Great War, that pushed the country into National Socialism, is forcing the continent of Europe into ever greater divisions, at the end of which a new war is waiting—the last, indeed, that she would ever be able to wage, since it would mean for her the end of all things. And thus we indicate the search that is undertaken in this book—a search for the means that shall prove most adequate to fulfil, in Germany, the social, political and universal purport of the Great War. And as we have mentioned that the Weimar Republic never understood how to enlist the two millions of dead into her ranks, we

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need not wonder that she herself had received the death-germ even before her own real life began. Everything, that might be said about her, is already from the beginning connected with the history of her opponents, against whose weapons she was powerless.

So this first chapter has been more or less a prenatal horoscope of the Weimar Republic, dealing not only with her own existence, but also with the circumstances under which she came into being.

## *Chapter II*

### The Origin of the Weimar Republic

**T**he origin of the German Republic was due, not to a great revolutionary impulse, but rather to sheer helplessness. It came into being, when the former structure of the State had become dilapidated to such an extent that it was breaking down of its own accord, and offering only a very insignificant target for Republican attacks. In November 1918 no really new forces came into power, but rather men who had already long exhausted their strength in opposition to something for which, in their inmost mind, they had the highest veneration. The Social Democrat party, which of necessity had to take the power in its hands, was far from being the depositary of any creative will. The Republic had befallen the Social Democrat leaders, as the ten plagues befell the land of Egypt, and they had tried their utmost to save Hohenzollern Germany in its last hours. That they did not succeed was not the fault of the Social Democrats, the true reason being that this same Germany collapsed and vanished at the very moment when it was being given an opportunity to justify its existence; and thus the Social Democrats, as His Majesty's most faithful revolutionaries, suddenly found

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themselves as it were in a vacuum, bereaved of a throne which they would readily have defended, even against its own will.

It was not Phillipp Scheidemann who proclaimed the Republic—it was the voice of the people, disgusted by so much pettiness, that compelled him to pronounce the final word and, because he offered no better resistance, he became the butt for indignant reproaches from his party comrades. We need not therefore wonder that during the years which followed they did all they could to persuade their lifelong opponents to forgive them, at least in part, for the fact that the help of the Social Democrats had not been utilized to better advantage; and it was, moreover, the counter-revolution rather than the revolution itself which began on that ninth of November, 1918.

Nor is it surprising that the Social Democrats were also desirous of winning back, and as quickly as possible, all those who had just been overthrown to a collaboration in the ruling of the State, and, of course, this was described as “incorporation”, and “reconciliation of opposing forces”. A few changes were effected in the higher offices, while the lower and lowest remained as they were, as may be illustrated by the following episode.

A high official in the advisory government committee for the coal industry asked Friedrich Ebert for his dismissal, as he was a monarchist, and felt it his duty to inform the Republic of the fact. Friedrich Ebert thereupon replied that his conviction was a credit to him and that he begged him to remain in

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office; and it is possible that Friedrich Ebert accepted it as a personal compliment to himself that a monarchist should condescend to serve the Republic. The Social Democrats had not succeeded in forestalling the Republic, but they tried at least to make it as harmless as possible. When they inconveniently found, for example, that many of their followers regarded the revolution as hardly yet begun, whereas to themselves it appeared to have been already long accomplished, the leaders made allies of all the military formations of the Right, wherever they happened to find them, and used them to march against the working classes, instead of calling the latter to their aid, as would have been more in accordance with their programme.

The Republic was from the very first burdened with inferiority complexes, as though from the hour of her birth she had felt ashamed of her existence; and in order to understand what followed we must realize that she never got over this idea. So timid and uncertain of herself was she, that she did not venture to refute the accusation that it was she who had brought Germany to ruin. It would nevertheless have been so easy to consolidate her position! With a little energy, with a little *élan* and an open profession of the theory of democracy—until then unknown in Germany—the support of the masses, even deep into the ranks of the middle class, might have been permanently won. It should have been their policy from the very beginning to adopt an attitude which would have made a return to pre-war conditions impossible. For it must be obvious to men of understanding that

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the Great War, with all its sacrifices, would only then find justification when there should emerge, at its end, an entirely new and free German people.

This book accordingly begins with an accusation of those who let the power be wrested out of their hands, at the very moment when it had, without any action on their part, been entrusted to them; and to the last page this accusation will be repeated, since for all that is now happening in Germany the Social Democrats and the other parties of the moderate Left must share the responsibility. Those, who now hold Germany terrorized, have been bred and nourished by the Republic from the first. There was no more terrible ordeal for her than to be ignored, for she needed the good opinion of others if her own existence were to be confirmed. It was for this reason that she desired at least to evoke animosity and opposition, for these were proofs that she was being taken seriously. Strangely enough the timid friendship, which the masses felt for her to the last moment, seemed a less convincing evidence to her of the vitality of her organism, of which she was doubtful herself, than did the intrigues and the sabotage of her decrees by the opponents of her ordinances. And so, with singular ill luck, she left those very parts of her body unprotected where she could receive the most deadly injuries; and through this same luck her opponents have made use of these weak spots to give greater effect to their blows.

If, during the war, the national enthusiasm of the earlier days had evaporated by reason of the starva-

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tion and the cold of years of misery, at least the question still remained with the people as to the meaning of all this suffering, and as to the benefit for the ruling of the State which was to be gained out of the sacrifice of the nation. The Republic only answered with a pale phraseology. She considered herself a child of penury and, out of a mistaken puritanism, would have thought it wrong to adorn her shoulders with even the simplest splendour. She has not even contradicted seriously, when in the first days the story of the "stab in the back" and the "unconquered armies"—since then proved wrong a hundredfold—was carried by diligent agitators through all the country. Perhaps she has not realized that by this means it was that the death germ was transmitted to her. Her only intellectual stock and store was an artificially puffed up myth from the year of 1848, that left everybody unsatisfied—all the more so because it was alien to reality, and doctrinaire to the highest degree. The Republic believed that university professors and scientific treatises were the most efficient methods of inspiring with new enthusiasm a people who recently had gone through the valley of despair.

During all those first years foreign politics were in the foreground, and above all it was necessary to liquidate the war which the unwise rulership of Hohenzollern Germany had not prevented, and of which therefore it partly also bore the guilt. Perhaps a statesman of genius might have secured a few more concessions at Versailles than the German delega-

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tion actually contrived to get; but even this is far from sure, for anybody who reads the commentary on the Treaty of Versailles, with which the allied and associated powers provided Germany at her request, will know that in face of this attitude all efforts would have been in vain. Before a document in which the most spiritual people of the earth is put below the lowest savage tribes, and wherein, with official sanction, everything reappears which had hitherto seemed only the output of a purposely deceptive war Press, every reasonable argument and every negotiation was bound to fail. Germany at Versailles was not dealing with people who were open to any humane or even rational consideration. Blind hatred and the will to final annihilation were confronting her, so tightly linked together that even among the representatives of her opponents warning voices were heard—but they were drowned, and so the tragedy took its course, a course that for the future of the whole world was to be of the most fatal significance.

These words are written for all those who nowadays take the alarmingly primitive view that Germany ought to have been treated still more harshly at Versailles, for what their "leniency" has led to may readily be seen in the Hitler régime. Many of them even believe that it is not too late to ally themselves against Germany with all opponents of National Socialism. They are led into this error through the lack of understanding and national dignity of those, who, like the National Socialists, identify Hitler with Germany. May it therefore be stated



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again, what to every thinking mind is a self-evident fact, that but for Versailles there never would have been any National Socialism. And so Germany's accusation is as much directed against her domestic enemies as against those who thrust her into this abject misery, and who first by that means prepared the way for the hardening of the arteries of the German people.

We were not astonished when we read a little while ago that Mr. Lloyd George had suddenly begun to demand "fairness" for the Nazis. Conceivably it was his own bad conscience, and his awareness of the fact that the National Socialists are the offspring of his own attitude at Versailles, that prompted him, in such a humiliating way, to take the part of the most terrible enemies of the German nation. The outcome of Versailles, which laid the foundation of all the misery that followed, had been determined upon long before the German delegation was led like convicts to the signing of it.

It was a blow from which the Republic, weak and weary from her birth, was destined never quite to recover. For not only was the treaty in itself an unbearable burden to the political and economical structure of Germany—it also meant an enormous moral loss of prestige to the Republic, all the more so since she lacked the ability to make it plausible to the people. For outwardly the parties that agreed to it bore the exclusive responsibility, though the Right also knew perfectly well that the Treaty had to be accepted at all events. To refuse it would have meant

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a prolongation of the hunger-blockade and the complete breakdown of the Reich. It is a fact that the representatives of the Right, at Weimar, solemnly begged the Left and the Centre for heaven's sake to vote for the ratification of Versailles. It was obvious, they added, that they could not do so themselves because of their electors, but they were ready to pledge themselves never to make use of these votes for purposes of domestic politics. Never has a promise been more shamefully broken; and never, either, has party had a more uneasy conscience than the Social Democrats, after they had voted for the ratification. This explains much of what happened soon afterwards.

The radical Right began to operate, with the argument that the Republican majority had with full consciousness damaged the country anew, whilst the Republic was trying her utmost to console the Right that in accordance with their own wish complete ruin had been avoided. A great deal of courage was wanted therefore in the ensuing years if a course of reconciliation were to be adopted—and yet it was the only one possible. Every step taken was, by the Right, ignominiously proclaimed as high treason—yet they themselves were unable to contribute the slightest particle to the reconstruction of Germany. The final proof of this and the end of the drama we see at the present moment in her isolation from all other countries, an isolation which set in immediately after the coming into power of National Socialism. All that for which men like Erzberger, Walter Rathenau and Stresemann have struggled, and for which two of

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them were assassinated by Right-radical murderers, has disappeared today; and there would have been more to destroy if, together with the German Nationals, the Nazis had not already done all they could to discount the success of Germany in foreign politics as much as possible.

In spite of all this the Republic, even under the most unlucky star, could have been more successful with the opposition if she had only been capable of showing a little more energy. But now we see, that right up to the failure of the Customs union with Austria, by which they sought to prove the staunchness of their patriotism, and their superiority in this respect to the members of the Right, and until the time of the illegal *Grenzschutz* (military protection of the frontiers), which, though it was antagonistic to the Republic, received consistent support from the Prussian coalition government, all they did was the outcome of youthful inferiority complexes, and it was done without strength or conviction.

Thus by its own fault the position of the new State became still more unfavourable. It suffered the fate of children whose birth is undesired by their parents, and who find themselves constantly treated as scapegoats. Perhaps many things would have turned out differently if only the Hohenzollern Germany had possessed a little more backbone. If there had been any fighting, it would have been possible that the masses would have discarded their leaders—even then weary and worn out—and would have chosen new ones on the spur of the moment. As this did not happen, the revolution

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of 1918 delivered its blow against mere emptiness. It found no opponent from whom sparks might as it were have been struck to kindle a new flame. But the faint glimmering, that had been sufficient to overthrow the ruling powers, was at once carefully extinguished by the leaders of the new State. Already, when the national assembly met in February 1919, the reaction had recaptured all the positions from which it had retired in such fear only a few months before. During that time it had perceived that they had no cause to be afraid and that the men, who for propagandist motives had been presented to the people as the reddest of Bolsheviks, were in reality very gentle and meek, with no ambitions other than to be accepted in Society.

Distress and hard necessity burdened the State from the very first. No song, no hymn was sung of it, no dreams of happiness inspired the masses. It did not even dare to be faithful to its own chosen symbols: the flag of the marine remained black-white-red, and for the navy the president of the Reich, Ebert, decreed the same colours; and beneath an arrangement which for the Republic might have been a weakness and a compromise we are glad to recognize an inner sense that it is right for black-red-gold to be connected no longer with war, and to be freed from any association with pre-war Germany. But of this surely nobody at Weimar thought. They believed it would be well for them to be obliging to the opponents of the State, and so they gave those who held the highest offices an opportunity to hide

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their political standpoint behind the folds of the mercantile flag. In this way at least appearances could be kept up.

Who, after all, had faith in the new State? Certainly not the Right, and perhaps not even the extreme Left; and, if we come to think of it, it cannot be claimed for the greatest constitutional party, the Social Democrats, that in Weimar they found fulfilment of all their expectations. Theoretically at least they had pretended to look forward to a quite different system, and characteristic expression was given to this in the slogan: "The Republic is no good—[we want]—Socialism—Brotherhood." This it was easy to understand from a window-dressing point of view; and once again it was the difference between thought and action and, ultimately, between the masses and their leaders, that distorted the whole. For while the leaders stood already within the concrete Republic, if they were not standing to the Right of her, to have expected a Social Democrat cabinet minister to speak up for Socialism would have been considered by him as a bad joke. On lower levels the case was quite different, and the older the Republic grew, the stronger grew the discontent, so that in her last days it was difficult, for instance, at a meeting—even when it was held in a non-party spirit—to speak of the "Republic" without giving the word a Socialistic interpretation.

As pillars of the State only the Centre remained, the Democrats and—long, long ago—in the days of Stresemann—the German people's party (*Deutsche*

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*Volkspartei*). But all these groups were also deficient in any clear understanding of their own desires. The strongest among them, the Centre, were divided among themselves. In the Republic, this party had won far-reaching concessions for Roman Catholic members of the community, and so it was going hand in hand with the Social Democrats, who possessed no point of view of their own in religious and educational matters. But they might as well have formed a coalition with the German Nationals, if only the latter had not overemphasized their Protestantism. Anyhow, in the Centre there was the well-known Right wing, which asked for an orientation towards the Right of the whole party. Its foremost exponents were Herr von Papen and Prince Aloys Loewenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg, whose eldest son Karl, already connected, in 1931, with the Nürnberg Roman Catholic Diet, had given utterance to sentiments that pointed to National Socialism. It must be attributed to this wing, that the Centre in many political questions occupied a somewhat vague position in the Reich, which often brought it into conflict with the masses of Christian working men. And so in the end only the Democrats remained, to whom the Weimar Republic was the achievement of their political aim. They had the best election meetings, and the best orators. Their leaders had a keener intellectual insight and greater power of expression than any others. But of what use are the best officers, when the soldiers are lacking? The Democrat party sank lower and lower, from one election to another, until at last it collapsed into com-

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plete parliamentary nonentity, consisting in the end of only the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the *Vossische* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

A State cannot be maintained in this way. The breakdown of the parliamentary system, the most important instrument of a constitutional State, that had already begun in Brüning's time, can be traced to this. In the Reichstag, there were from the September elections of 1930 onward no longer any competent Republican powers, and the more the Government detached itself from the Reichstag to cling to the President of the Reich, the more unstable did the situation become.

In Germany, however, parliament is still far less the expression of the will of the people than it is in other countries, and in spite of all theory, all disappointment and all disillusion, the State was more strongly rooted there than was commonly accepted. This was true above all for the first period, when by the masses the word "Republic" still was felt as a contrast to "Monarchy" and when all that mattered to them was to escape from the danger of *restauration*. More than once or twice it might have been possible to enlist these forces in the service of the Republic, and perhaps the greatest of these lost opportunities was just after the murder of Walter Rathenau.

The state of mind of hundreds of thousands among the working classes, when for hours they drifted up and down in the streets of Berlin, might have given birth to entirely new impulses. At that moment the Republic was offered an opportunity through which she

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might have corrected the missed revolution of 1918—but she was afraid of her own strength. The plentiful years between 1924 and 1929 destroyed the last remnants of a free-spirited vitality, and the Republic was degraded to everyday staleness, to political pothouse arguments, beneath the aegis of a black-red-gold flag. Nobody cared any longer about really important problems, and everything that mattered seemed to have been already cut and dried.

I remember how this view still predominated when at last the flaming signals of the Right-radical upheaval became clearly visible. In July 1930 I was with a Democratic journalist, who was responsible for part of “public opinion” in Berlin at that time, and we passed a house that flew the black-red-gold banner. He turned to me and said, “You know, of course, that the form of government and the question of the flag have been settled once and for all.” During the election campaign of 1932, when the black-red-gold banners had to hide ever more timidly, I often thought of this, and I especially recalled it, and for the last time, when at the *Funkturm* (the wireless tower) of Berlin the Hakenkreuz flag was hoisted on high.

The Republic could have had Republicans enough, if only she had wanted them enough; but she did not see that beyond parties and their leaders there were millions who, when it was a question of Reich and Republic, were in deadly earnest, and who at the present moment represent Germany’s great protest. I think of all those to whom I myself



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have spoken on these matters—of the miners in the Ruhr and in Westphalia, of the unemployed in Brunswick and Bremen, of the peasantry in Posen and along the frontiers of Western Prussia, of the many and the nameless, who did their duty and loved this Republic that has again and again disappointed them. Until the present moment, when there seems to be an end of German freedom and of any German future, they have waited to be called. They were ready long ago, and they did not think of material advantages. More clearly than their fossilized leaders in the councils of the Social Democrat party, and in the Trade Union committees they have clearly understood that their desire should not be for bread alone—and that even this would be lost to them if they should forget, for the sake of material prosperity, the spiritual ideals of the nation.

There is an explanation of this which at the same time explains everything else: the Republic sprang into being without leaders, and never succeeded in creating representatives of far-reaching insight and power. The German people were waiting for their leader to appear, but, when no-one came, they demanded that at least some sort of leader should be promised to them. With such yearning the Republic never had any sympathy, rejecting it indeed as altogether “non-Republican”, and thereby she left the field open for all false prophets and “brown baboons”, who from theatrical wardrobes had filched and disguised themselves in the habiliments of leaders. She who never showed severity where it

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was properly needed, here, where it was utterly wrong, followed a course that would have given proof of character, if it had not merely been the result of lack of insight.

It will perchance be charged against me that even in the few foregoing pages it plainly appears that I am writing a book against the Republic rather than against National Socialism; but neither the one nor the other of these is my intention. I am taking up arms against everyone who has been the enemy of Germany. National Socialism is but the inevitable consequence of what was overlooked and neglected by the others—it is the putrefaction of the decaying Democratic Republic, and it will only be properly understood by those who know the matrix out of which it was born.

It has always been our firm belief that those, to whom after the revolution of 1918 power had been given, were in honour bound, and for the people's sake, at any cost to keep it. If they failed to show any great ability themselves when they raised barriers against all that was new and creative, yet their personal character should have been a guarantee against the atrocities which are now being committed in Germany. That surely was the meaning of the battle, fought for the sake of Weimar, and from entirely different motives than those of the official parties, by men who saw in it no promise of fulfilment. Although the constitution of Weimar had created very little in the way of new ideas, yet it was an indispensable foundation for any further reconstruction. Until the

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very last days of the Republic I esteemed her worthy of protection, as one esteems the husk in which the seed is concealed; and in simple justice I except from my accusation everyone who cooperated in the creation of the constitution. Such men deserve no other blame than that they credited their opponents with more instinctive decency than they actually possessed.

The German Republic was erected on the acquired rights which other countries had won by their revolutions. Germany had to overtake the general development that France had achieved since 1789, though this need not be taken to imply that we ought already to have arrived where France stands today. It is quite impossible to imagine a present-day European State, unmodified by the French Revolution. Even as 1848 was unable to secure the triumph of Liberal ideas, so we need not wonder that current expressions of republican ideology, such as Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, were still being used in the Germany of 1919 in a sense that long ago had received new meanings in other countries. The Weimar constitution has dealt with this topic very exhaustively in its "primary rights" (*Grundrechte*), but with an idealism so remote from reality that words in everyday use had become almost emptied of real meaning. It believed, for instance, that "Democracy" implied that every single individual was to be allowed to engage in any activity whatever, even when this was directed against the structure of the State, and thus it very soon became evident that the opponents

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of the Republic were receiving more advantage from her than were her closest and most faithful friends.

This error of interpretation in the case of "Democracy" has been predominant in the Republic from her very origin, and only on these lines can an explanation be found of the fact that the powers of the Labourers' and Soldiers' Councils have already, in very short time and at the cost of a great many lives of men who had fought for the establishment of the Republic, been transferred by them to the National Assembly.

Even then it was not too late to have taken the only sensible way, as all men of understanding preached to the deaf ears of the Republican leaders. Democracy, in the true sense of the word, and as it had of necessity to be interpreted in disunited post-war Germany, was not to be identified with weak submission. Its aim was rather to give the greatest possible number of people a share in the rights of the people as a whole—such privilege for everyone without exception is perhaps impracticable at our present stage of development. The aim of democratic statesmen therefore, in their ruling of the people, ought to have been to counteract all disturbances which originated from small minorities. It would, for example, have been by no means undemocratic if all groups, grasping after dictatorship, had been excluded from the rights of Democracy, since to let them have their way would have amounted to an endangering of the rights of a far greater number of the people. The German Republic has never fully understood these

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things, and therein has been her undoing. It has almost seemed as though she felt it her duty to commit *hara-kiri*—as if this were also one of the rules of the democratic game.

Voluntarily she gave away her power, not only on the twentieth of July, 1932, but previously also, when she recalled Hindenburg to become head of the Reich. It is true that in the circumstances then prevailing it was necessary to work for his election, and I myself was among those who did so to the utmost of my power. But why was it necessary? For two reasons chiefly—because it was considered democratic to let Adolf Hitler, the exponent of all the enemies of a democratic state, be a candidate for the presidency, and because the Republic had not been able during seven years to produce any leading personality competent to gather within his own single control the suffrages of the various parties. None of the men who had played a part in the Republic would himself have dared to come to the front—not because they were too modest, but because they feared Republican ostracism as much as they feared personal responsibility.

Neither was there anyone endowed with a strong and original will. This accusation is not directed only against the Republic, or against her statesmen solely, for it was the action and counteraction of a number of different causes that converted the Republic into such a pale image, such a conception of the brain only, and robbed the leaders of all radiating value of their own.

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This is perhaps the proper point at which to conclude a chapter that deals with origins and yet at the same time also with discomfiture. The Republic was so matter-of-fact that she would only make use of matter-of-fact means. She believed that the soul of the people could be touched by red-tape measures and that syllogisms would suffice for the persuasion of her opponents. Everything else, the pulsating life of a community, the whole domain of the spirit, of the transcendental, was beyond her ken; and even if she had been aware of these things she would hardly have made use of them. Such matters could not have been brought before the Reichstag, nor was it possible to have cast votes about them in party meetings. Neither might she celebrate public festivals, or call to her assistance anything that could have inspired and fascinated—she could employ nothing but cold appeals to intellect. From the same point of view she believed that any individual could safely be replaced by any other, and this idea prevailed in all organizations that had supported her. Thus it came about that there was no room for outstanding personalities, and that she had neither power nor will to protect her prominent men when they were reviled or slandered. And so her methods necessarily had to fall short of those of her antagonists, for these had at their disposal a whole arsenal of possibilities, the existence of which was unknown to her.

It is an instructive spectacle that has been enacted here before our very eyes, for in spite of all those who

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now will shake their head doubtfully, we declare that the downfall of the German Republic was accomplished by quasi-magical rather than by ordinary means. How else should it be described when the leader-cult of National Socialism has been carried to such excess that for some years past domestic shrines have been erected to Adolf Hitler? We found information on this point in the official party Press, adorned with a wealth of details. The altar was to be placed in the best room of the house, it was said, and on it must stand a portrait of Adolf Hitler, surrounded by flowers and other small offerings. Every demonstration, every meeting of the Nazis had its semi-magical equipment, and its ceremonial utterances that in a mysterious tone promised inconceivable things, with an appeal to the immortal spirit of Horst Wessel—who in life had not been much more than a man who made a living out of the lewdness of others—thus using the tie between the souls of the living and the souls of the dead for their own ends, while even the clumsiness of their methods does not prevent their magic from being effective.

In the neighbourhood of Berlin there was a man called Josef Weissenberg, who bewitched his congregation, numbering, it is said, many thousands of people, merely by such methods. In his book *Das Wunderbare* Rudolf Olden has described how he and I were once together there. Weissenberg's sermon was perfectly insipid, with not one sentence in it that really meant anything; and yet the whole audience, whether working men, lower middle class, or cul-

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tured people, were so hypnotized that they obeyed his orders without volition of their own. The similarity between this more than equivocal performer of miracles, who was accustomed to make his audience fall into hysterics and quakings, and Adolf Hitler, who delivered much the same sort of insipid speeches, and with equally disastrous results, was often remarked at that time—and how justified was the comparison has been realized as yet by only a few.

The Republic was confronting forces against which she was powerless, as they did not manifest themselves on any level with which she was familiar, or of common experience. For a little while, it is true, an endeavour was made to employ similar methods: as when the decorations known as the "Three Arrows" were distributed among the people, implying, it was explained, unity, attack, and discipline, or Social Democracy, Trade Unions, Sports Clubs, but in reality meaning very little. Their real significance was that they were to serve as symbols, and this they have accomplished, damaging the Hakenkreuz more severely than any laws or decrees. Their effect, however, was lost when they ceased to be an emblem beyond and above all parties—that is, when the Social Democrat party commandeered them for its own ends. At that they were bereft of all inner life, becoming mere ordinary badges, such as are worn in buttonholes or painted on the walls of a house. And so they lost their original power. All the same, in spite of all pretended derision, they were still taken so seriously by the Nazis, that the latter, when they



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came into power, organized a formal hunt after them; but apart from this trifling effort the Republic never really understood the position, and so it came about that even those rare swordstrokes, for which she sometimes found courage, were of no avail.

After all that has been said in these few pages, we need not wonder that the Weimar State inevitably broke down, lacking all those things that might have guaranteed its existence. As we proceed, this will become clearer still, but for the present, out of the many indications by which the German protest reveals itself, we have now set forth the most essential. They all point to the same: what had been predicted for the Republic, in the doleful hour of her birth, she fulfilled in a slavish dependence on her stars, thereby not only injuring herself, but also surrendering the possibilities of recovery that might have served for the reconstruction of a new Reich. And beyond that she must bear the guilt for the misery of millions, and has perhaps delayed for many years a great people on the way to its Western mission. There remains only one consolation: those who failed to break down the weakest State that ever existed, but had to wait for its suicide, before they could take over the power (which for the moment they still hold), are yet further away from the union with the historical forces of the German people than the Republic ever was. The methods they use to maintain their rule will not be sufficiently powerful to prevent their plunge into the abyss; but the misery, which these years of transition bring with them, might have been avoided.

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And to do that was the historical mission of the State that was so reluctantly born in November 1918, and that therefore knew no other aim than to shirk its responsibility.

### *Chapter III*

## The Opponents of the Weimar Republic

**T**he preceding chapter has furnished a short description of the origin of the Republic, and it was mentioned that from the beginning she was infected with the most dangerous germs of disease, which she had not strength to overcome. Beyond this general survey it seems, however, necessary to speak more in detail of the several powerful groups that from 1918 onwards rose against the State of Weimar, and on the programme of which was written more or less openly the sentence of its downfall.

In the earliest days of the Republic, in the winter of 1918-19, it was the Left-radical elements that drew the general attention to themselves. The fighting that was going on with the so-called "Spartacists"—proletarian organizations, named after Spartacus, the liberator of the slaves at the time of Pompeius, in Rome—had a far-reaching significance, as the Republic had to accept the help of the military formations of the Right, through which they gained considerable influence for the future. It cannot be denied that these Spartacist insurrections, which had spread widely in Central Germany, and also in Berlin, had chiefly been caused by the hesitating attitude

The Opponents of the Weimar Republic of the largest party of the working class, the Social Democrats, who had attained power. As we have already described how they had in November 1918 begun to have secret understandings with the representatives of the Hohenzollern State, but recently overthrown, we cannot wonder that large sections of the working class felt disappointed and asked themselves, what was the use of the Revolution, if it should only alter the name of the head of the State and not the inner structure of Germany.

The demand of the more Radical wing within the masses of working men was to secure the newly captured governing power, by the erection of a council system, that in no way was to be an imitation of the Russian prototype. They hoped to prevent the reactionary parties, supported by German capitalism, from gaining renewed influence by an immediate meeting of the National Assembly. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, were of the opinion that as far as possible every step should be according to what they had learned out of the history books of 1848, and therefore they refused to understand that all they did could have no other result than to strengthen the counter-revolution in Germany. The Spartacist revolts, and the manner in which they were crushed, had very speedily robbed the Republic of popular sympathy. Those were the days when the Social Democrat Minister of Defence, Noske, openly asserted that "One of us has to be the bloodhound".

The weakening of the Social Democrat party by

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the Communists, who soon formed themselves out of its Left wing, was caused through this; but there was also the fact that the Republic, feeling herself too feeble to attempt the overthrow of the Spartacists through her own power, had no scruples about encouraging and protecting all sorts of illegal military organizations; and this damaged her greatly, by enabling the parties of the Right to claim that without their aid Germany would have been swamped in a sea of blood. This assumption as a matter of fact was wrong, for without the democratic tendencies of the Free Trade Unions, and other organizations based on Social Democracy, the Right could have achieved nothing. All the same it did its work, and it was willingly believed by all the lower middle classes who were paralysed by fear of a revolution. These, together with the official representatives of the Republic, did not realize that there was only one way to take the wind out of the sails of the Spartacists, and later on of the Communists, that had incorporated themselves in the Third International; namely, by fostering social justice in the community, as after the common suffering and the common sacrifices of the war was an absolute necessity.

Psychologically it might be comprehensible, therefore, that up to the end of the Weimar Republic the Communists maintained that their chief enemies were the Social Democrats, and it is clear enough that this claim was indirectly of great advantage to the parties of the Right, since thus the working class was divided into two camps, and had no opportunity

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of using its entire strength against the threatening reaction.

The German Communists, however, would learn nothing, and remaining faithful to their dogma they left nothing undone to ruin the Republic; and they did not or would not see that those who profited by these tactics were their own enemies as well as those of the Weimar Republic. Often it even seemed as though the Communists were openly heading for a Nazi rule. An utterance of Manuilsky, the referee for Germany in the Central Executive Committee of the Communistic International in Moscow, who said something of that sort, was at that time often quoted in Germany. His assertion was neither more nor less than that the German Radicals of the Right were the best allies of the Communists, since every "brown" dictatorship must of necessity tend towards a Soviet Germany. As a matter of fact we actually saw that the Communists at every casting of votes in Parliament combined with their mortal enemies of the Right against the representatives of the Weimar Republic, and these tactics reached their climax in the plebiscite against the Prussian Government, on the ninth of August, 1931.

It will be necessary to go back for a moment to what happened at that time. The Nazis and the German Nationals were not able to compass by parliamentary methods the dissolution of the Prussian Diet, or the overthrow of the Prussian Government, that during almost ten years had been composed of Social Democrats, members of the Centre and Demo-

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crats. Therefore they took to the methods, lawful according to the Prussian constitution, of a general voting, which should compel the Diet to dissolve and offer the legitimate possibility of a reign of the Right. They hoped thus to secure the much-needed support of the "Bulwark of the Republic", as the Prussian State was called, and so to have the very valuable assistance of the Prussian police. How decisive was the triumph over Prussia was realized a year afterwards, when Herr von Papen on the twentieth of July staged his *coup d'État* against the Prussian Government, as will be related in a subsequent chapter of this book.

In 1931, however, matters had not yet gone as far as that. The power of the German Reich was wielded by the Brüning Government, and it was generally believed that through the loyal attitude of the President of the Reich, von Hindenburg, it was firmly established for many years to come, and that any attacks upon the Republican constitution, so solemnly sworn to, would be easily repelled.

A strong support to the Brüning Government—the strongest it had anywhere in the country—was the Prussian Government, at the head of which were Otto Braun, and the Minister for the Interior, Karl Severing. To overthrow these men, and to get rid of all other Prussian ministers, faithful to the constitution, would therefore have meant a direct and deadly attack on the government of the Reich as well. For among the political Right they knew perfectly well that Brüning never would have had recourse to the

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methods Herr von Papen used a year later to enforce his central dictatorship. During the campaign for the plebiscite about the dissolution of the Prussian Diet, it was expected that all those parties would go together, for which reason it was important to prevent a Right-radical dictatorship in Prussia, while the Communists were expected to remain at least neutral. In the beginning it seemed as if they intended to do so; they even had broadcasted pamphlets and held meetings in which they rigorously opposed the "Fascist plebiscite".

All the greater was the astonishment when, about ten days before the ninth of August, a change occurred, probably by orders from Moscow, but in any case revealing the most astounding lack of knowledge throughout Germany. Without any preliminary warning, the instruction was issued: "All votes for the Red plebiscite of the ninth of August." At that, we thought that the fate of the Republican Government in Prussia was sealed and we looked forward with the greatest anxiety to the approaching day of election. Grotesque scenes were enacted in its course. At Potsdam, ladies belonging to the oldest nobility and widows of the highest army officers went to the election urn together with Communistic workmen, the former to pave the way for a reactionary and feudal Germany, the latter to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In Berlin, on that ninth of August, an excitement reigned, rarely seen before, and all that day, from morning till night, I was driving through quarters



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of the town where the working classes live, and all of them gave vent to their indignation that the Communist party had become the helpmate of the Right radicals. It was a day on which the Weimar Republic might have regained an almost unlimited amount of all she had lost in the course of so many years, and when the result of the voting became known, which showed a great defeat, contrary to all expectation, of the combined Communists, Nazis, and German Nationals together, it seemed as if a new dawn was beginning for German Democracy; for it became apparent that large masses of Communists had refused to follow the leaders in their blindness to realities, and that the rank and file, better than the latter, had understood what a vote against the Prussian Government meant.

During the evening of the ninth of August two Prussian police officers were shot by the Communists, in the Bülow Square in Berlin, officers, I believe, who had risen from the ranks, and I can bear witness at first hand as to these doings, for, not more than half an hour after the murders had been committed, I happened to be on the spot.

It was one of the most uncanny situations I can remember, and such nervousness and excitement reigned everywhere that the police nearly fired at my car. The pavement was full of people, who talked of the events, and among them were many Communists—the Bülow Square is in one of the Communist quarters of the town—who openly turned their back on the tactics of their party.

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We shall not here dwell on the fact that the Republic did not even know how to use her psychological success of the ninth of August, since that matter is dealt with in another part of this book. For the moment I only intend to show which line the Communist party took, and I believe this will be most explicitly done by examples.

It is fairly obvious that less than all others the Communists have any cause for reproaching the Republican parties with their overthrow by radicalism of the Right, for every single step they have taken has hastened the course of the "brown" conquest of Germany. And yet they had the most splendid opportunities for a really effective stirring of the masses! The millions of unemployed were the great army in reserve, which all parties tried to win, and there was no reason why they should not have joined the Communist ranks. Instead of giving their undivided attention, however, to the sufferings in their own country, the German Communists arranged protest meetings against the oppression of the Chinese, and I believe that they even conducted a whole election campaign with this as their principal issue.

Moreover it seemed absurd, when in Germany, where at that time nobody was thinking of war, that their stirring of the masses should have been accompanied by slogans such as "Down with war against the Soviet Union". Nobody understood what was meant by that. The working men read the catchwords and believed, certainly, that to condemn war was a good thing; but they did not draw the conclu-

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sion that any danger of war, perhaps existent somewhere in the Far East, might be overcome by letting a very tangible and very near domestic war break out at home. The increase of Communists to six millions in November 1932 can therefore only be explained by the pressure of the Right, and by the failure of Social Democracy in its feeble attempts to defend itself against the reaction. This electoral success must certainly not be set down to the credit of the leaders, and it is therefore easy to understand that Communism was no real danger to Germany, for these six millions would rapidly have dwindled if a firm and just government had assumed power, which, as in the case of General von Schleicher's attempt during the last months of the Republic, would have frustrated the onesided measures of a capitalistic dictatorship.

When dealing with the Communists in Germany, we ought not to overlook the support they got from the German intellectuals and from the upper classes in general. This fact is mentioned in several passages later on, but it is as well to make passing reference to it now, and to add that this support originated from more than a single cause. Among German intellectuals were certain who thought of Communism as a sort of stimulant, by means of which their own lack of vitality might be remedied, and these rejoiced at the thought of a revolution, as thoroughgoing as possible, for so they hoped to find release from their own inhibitions. Viewed psychologically, what urged them on was the prospect of their own destruction,

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imagination of a world falling to pieces, and an ultimate flight into chaos. In theatres of the West End of Berlin, I have seen performances of revolutionary plays and films which cast the wealthiest audiences of Germany into an ecstasy. Ladies and gentlemen in evening dress—the most exquisite productions of the best Berlin and London costumière and tailors—rose to sing the *Internationale*; and, when the Russian film *Potemkin* was presented, enthusiasm waxed hottest in the stalls when the red flag was hoisted.

Newspapermen, authors, artists, and all who were most exacting in such matters as luxurious food and domestic comfort, spoke with beatific smiles of “the return to the simple life”, and sang the praises of the mailed fist, which to them was a thing in practice quite unknown. All this is typical of a society nearing its end, even as before the French Revolution the Court and the nobility deified Beaumarchais, and in *The Marriage of Figaro* applauded their own ruin.

The tidal current that carried so many representatives of the upper classes to the Communists had, however, other sources as well, for these people were troubled not only by their bad consciences, and by their social anxieties, but also by an obscure sense of special responsibility. As an example of this I might mention Count Alexander Stenbock-Fermor. Born of wealthy Swedish-Baltic parents, he had lost all his estates in the Russian revolution, and had for a considerable time himself fought in the White Army against the Communists. His books, bearing witness to a highly gifted creative power, have become known

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far beyond the borders of Germany. After his flight from Russia he lived in Germany in the greatest poverty for many years, for a part of the time as a miner on very low wages. Perhaps the change was brought about there. Without actually becoming a member of the Communist party he began to strive for its ideals, travelling all over Germany and seeing with his own eyes the suffering which he has described in a soul-stirring book *Deutschland von unten* (Germany from below). I met him often and highly appreciated his plastic talent of narration; and I believed what he said when he assured me that he had taken sides with the Communists because there only could he see any hope of liberation from social misery. He in no way belonged to that type of renegades who seem able only by sansculottism to prove their change of attitude. He always remained what he was, the feudal Baltic nobleman, who had conscientiously enlisted in a class he did not consider his own. I have lately heard that he has for months been an inmate of Nazi prisons.

Or take the author Ludwig Renn, who under this fictitious name conceals the personality of a member of the ancient German nobility, and who maybe has acted with similar motives. He had gone through the war, and was profoundly disgusted by the sham "patriotism", with an eye to business, of the ruling classes, when on his return home he found that nothing of the freedom and justice for which the fighting army had been yearning had been realized. He has recently been sentenced for "high treason" by the Nazi courts.

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All these people, of whom Count Stenbock and Ludwig Renn were representatives, would never have sought refuge in Communism if the Weimar system had been a real and living organism. Nor could they see that the Weimar constitution, the result of so many compromises, at least contained the germs of a new and better growth, a new ordinance, which was worth protection for the sake of the Reich that was to be. Deep into the ranks of the intellectuals this Communism, *faute de mieux*, had forced its way, and it was only the methods of the Communists that still restrained many of them from openly becoming members of the party. These currents were intensified by the longing of the best for a real ideal, which was to be found in the Weimar constitution only by those who regarded it, as we try to show, merely as the necessary foundation of a quite different structure. National Socialism offered nothing that would have satisfied a reflective mind, and so there remained only Communism, and perhaps they were led by the hope that it would be possible to mould it gradually into a Western form.

It was not without deliberate purpose that we began this book about the "tragedy" of the German nation with a chapter concerning the inner meaning of the Great War, since the War must have its place in any careful consideration of Communist aims. A nation that had been struggling for four years against two-thirds of the world in arms, and that had been compelled to concentrate all her thoughts and energies on self-preservation, had but little time to

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spare for international ideals. Often hidden and utterly unknown to themselves, in everyone there persisted, as the most potent power, and side by side with the social problem and the suffering it implied, the national ideal, although it may have taken different shape for each. And this fact the Communists began to understand only after their overthrow. When they too made bold to begin the struggle against Versailles, their words did not ring true, and caused more astonishment than actual effect. It is of first importance to remember that the defeat of the Communists in Germany was due to their neglect of immaterial values, and to the mistake of the leaders of the Third International who believed that they could arouse the enthusiasms of the people solely by a fight for bread. Any mere call to a war of classes was bound to fail, because every class, and not the workers only, was feeling the pressure on the whole country, that spared nobody.

This is why it was that Adolf Hitler, in his address to the working men of the Siemens factories, on the tenth of November, 1933, was able to exploit these feelings for his own ends. With great psychological skill he offered another outlet for the instincts of the fighting proletarians, when he indicated Germany herself as the oppressed class among the nations. He explained that although they might continue to hold the same views as before, they should apply them not to the German industrials and capitalists, but rather to the intensification of hatred against all those foreign forces which had sought to humiliate Germany. This

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address gave plain evidence of the skilful tactics of the National Socialists.

These tactics, which had their origin in the first years of the Republic, were nourished by other sections of the “*Deutsch-Völkische Freiheitsbewegung*” (the German Peoples’ Freedom-movement party), which favoured individual terrorism, and from the ranks of which issued the murderers of Erzberger and Rathenau. National Socialism therefore did but repay a debt of gratitude to its originators when, after seizing power in Germany, it almost deified these murderers and presented them as radiant examples for the youth of Germany. Whoever is interested in the origin of the “National Socialist German Labour Party” (to give it its name in full), may read of all this in Hitler’s *My Struggle*—if he can be patient with the style and loquacity of the book. And yet this very loquacity is of the greatest significance for all who desire a deeper insight into the mystery of Nazi success. With the utmost plainness of speech are there described the methods by which the masses are to be captivated. No statement is too exaggerated to be believed, if only it is repeated often enough. With a courage that is as astounding as their disregard for truth, the Nazis have stuck to that code from the beginning, and it is interesting to watch how they now follow exactly the same tactics in their foreign politics.

We have said that National Socialism, to stir the masses, started from the national sentiment of the German people, who after the War had seen their frontiers violated and their wealth destroyed. The



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Treaty of Versailles is therefore the first cause of National Socialism, and all who today cling so resolutely to the power that they possess should give thanks to "whatever gods there be" that in a suburb of Paris, in the year 1919, a failure of understanding gained so great a victory over the will for peace among the nations of the world.

National Socialism has been characterized as a symptom of disease, for it can only be explained by the material and moral breakdown, which though it did not actually begin in November 1918, yet at that time manifested itself. The Reich of Bismarck had not been what the best Germans had dreamt of, and the aphorism of Friedrich Nietzsche may be repeated here: "In the year 1871 German spirituality has been sacrificed to create the German Reich." This so-called German Reich was merely the fulfilment of Brandenburg-Prussian history—it provided no complete fulfilment of German history as a whole.

For the sake of justice it must be acknowledged that there were moments in the life of the Emperor William II when undoubtedly he understood the significance of his office; but he was the bearer of a rank that went beyond his measurement, and many times his own voice must have frightened him, when it made him utter things which as a human being he did not himself understand. The splendour of his imperial crown never reached beyond the most narrow Court circles, and it illuminated only those who exploited their acquaintanceship with the monarch for their own material ends—even as at the present time German

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magnates of industry and big landowners make use of the Hitler dictatorship. They are the same now as then, and it is important to recognize in them the sworn enemies of the Weimar Republic, under which their significance had been greatly minimized. Whenever the Emperor Wilhelm II attempted to get nearer to the people, these persons interposed themselves; and it was for this reason, to a great extent, that the Emperor, even during the war, remained a stranger amidst the mass of the people who were fighting his battles. To the general public he did not appear as the leader for whom they were waiting; at best he was to them a functionary appointed by the constitution, the representative of an ordinary institution of the State.

And so the people lacked any standard by which they might have measured the stature of a real leader. It was an almost Messianic hope, that arose out of the depths of the nation, and with that faith in miracles, found only in Germany, she watched, after the end of the old State, for the coming Saviour. In his hands everything would be renewed, and whatever he touched would spring to life and gain an outward form. In all orders and classes lived the same thought, and even those who outwardly professed to trust the righteousness of Acts of Parliament—the results merely of majority votes—inwardly were waiting for other and better possibilities. It may be that here the influence of the mighty dead was felt, the influence of those who died with an infinite longing in their hearts, and with an

The Opponents of the Weimar Republic unfulfilled faith in the "Renewer and Extender of the Holy Reich". We are far from rejecting these things as mere imaginations, for we too believe that they are decisive for the future of our people; but it was fatal that sheer restlessness should have made it impossible for these elements in the nation to have waited in patience, since neither in 1918 nor in our days the time has fully come. There was no leader in Germany then, and there is no-one yet. Moreover, there was not even one who might have given Germany the rest she needed, by telling her that the right and proper moment cannot be brought about by force.

For four thousand years the Jewish people, and with them the whole world, had waited for the Redeemer. And he could only come when step by step they had prepared themselves. A great warning this might have been to Germany, for hardly seven hundred years had passed since the death of the occidental German Kaiser Friedrich II, whose glorious return was promised and hoped for in the legends of the German people. But these legends also said that the time of waiting should be shortened, and so there was no need to hasten events and to give to one, who wrongly called himself "leader", the heritage to which he had no right. But not the people bear the guilt of this: only those who had not the wisdom to lead them. Their sins are as great as the unrighteousness of those others who utilized the good faith of the German people to creep into positions of leadership. It should have been the task of the Weimar Republic

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to preserve for the German people the Democratic foundations on which the coming Reich could be erected. It was her duty to have rejected, by all proper and available means, the claims put forth by the National Socialists. But she has omitted to do this, and therein lies the heavy guilt with which she has burdened herself. She has done nothing to denounce Adolf Hitler openly as a pseudo-leader—rather has she suffered him to usurp a power that was never intended for him.

Adolf Hitler has known perfectly well what he was doing, from the first moment that he appeared with his claim to absolute leadership. He knew that he thereby appealed to hidden and powerful forces in the heart of the German people, and that is the only explanation of how a man with so little personality and so few creative possibilities could acquire such power. Anyone who reads what he has written, or the addresses he has delivered, or who looks at his portrait, will be dumbfounded every time. For he will find nothing. To people of modern times it may sound strange, but it has to be repeated over and over again: his rising to power can only be explained by a sort of magic, and what he says does not really matter. It is enough that he should have spoken—as when in *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, in the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves", the formula, meaningless in itself, of "Open sesame" caused the doors to spring ajar. All who live outside Germany will do well to accept this as a fact, whether they understand its implications or not.

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There is little use in trying to analyse Hitler's character. What is there remarkable in him? He is the 'eighties of the nineteenth century come to life again; he is the incorporated sham rococo style, that has still an attraction for certain strata of the German people. And on the lines of this sham rococo all points of Hitler's programme can be explained. His socialism is that of the industrials of the 'nineties—"After all, the working man is a human being too, and something must be done for him". His nationalism is an oleograph of Bismarck in the uniform of a grenadier, and his reconstruction of the State is as an old Prussian sergeant might conceive it. But everything is wrapped in vague and misty ideas, that must appear to emit the tremulous light of creativeness; and with rare skill, as we ungrudgingly grant him, and with the mien of an idealist and a good bourgeois, he has the courage to utter rubbish and lies. And this is how the man has worked and is still working, though most of us find it difficult to believe that anyone would be deliberately capable of so consistently saying things which in no way are conformable with the truth.

We need not, however, reproach the German people for being duped by this manoeuvring, for we see nowadays that all countries of Europe, with the one exception perhaps of France, accept all these endearments of Hitler's seriously, even when they are in obvious contradiction to his deeds. And they will go on with it, until the Nazis feel strong enough to let loose another European war. And then it will be

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The situation of Germany as a whole was favourable soil to the Nazi agitation. After the war people needed only to speak loudly of German honour and freedom—which had been endangered recently by their own doings—and the masses would come crowding round the speaker. Only those, however, could speak in that way, who had no responsibility. Unburdened by any obligation of putting their promises into practice, the Nazis could shake their fists at the French, the English and the Poles, and they need only show their courage in the *Fehme* murdering of German soldiers, who had really and only a short time ago fought against Polish invasions.

As early as 1924-25 I attended Nazi meetings at Munich, which were even then extraordinarily successful. The mere manner in which a speaker pronounced the name "Stresemann" was sufficient to let loose the hurricanes, and in chorus and for several minutes an audience would yell "The traitor . . . the traitor", and similar things. And it was an evening much to be remembered when Hitler, not very long after the beginning of his career, cried: "What need have we of weapons? Out of our fists the weapons will sprout!" The saying worked suggestively but, luckily for the balance-sheets of the German war industry, it was not taken literally later on. The "brown" movement raised itself on mass orgies of uncontrolled sensationalism, and it would have been hopeless to fight

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against it with arguments. The only method left was to seek refuge in concrete things.

I have put questions on these points to the inhabitants of the Ruhr, asking them who it was, when all was said and done, who freed them from foreign troops—the politicians of the Democratic Republic, or the Sedan festivals, repeated every day in the public houses, or at the meetings of the National Socialists, who certainly did not make the French regiments go. All, who had lived there, gave the adequate answer; but what was the good of this, as long as the masses of the people did not realize what was going on? They only heard the loud noise made by the Nazis, and then they saw that after a while the district of the Ruhr and the Rhineland returned to Germany. Who can wonder that non-existent causal connections were assumed? Who does not know the story of the grasshopper—"hayhorse" as it is called in German—that was sitting on a heavily loaded wagon which the horses could not drag any farther? Goodnaturedly it hops down, and as the wagon at the same moment starts again—the horses now being rested—it goes to the driver and says: "Did you see how I helped you?"

In the chapter headed "Nation and Justice" we shall try, in greater detail, to reveal the different sources from which National Socialism was nourished. Here we have only intended to give a few preliminary indications, essential to the understanding of what follows; but it must nevertheless be added here that, as with the Communists, so with the Nazis

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also, the social problem was of the greatest importance. The latter only, however, succeeded in uniting the two tendencies, and by that means captivating also large sections of the labouring classes, to whom the Hakenkreuz seemed a short cut to Socialism. In the ensuing chapter, that deals with the social problem of Germany, these matters will be dealt with at length. We might add that the Nazis received strong support from the mentality of the German Courts of Justice, which from the beginning measured by different standards. Because of their upbringing the German judges did not consider the Nazi attacks as criminal as those directed against the State by the Left. I have even observed that political decrees of the Prussian Government, intended to restrain the upheavals of National Socialism, were on occasion annulled by the highest Prussian Courts. And to what extent the disintegration of the seemingly independent jurisdiction had advanced, during the years of the Republic, is clearly shown by the procedure of the Reichstag fire trial in the lawcourts of Leipzig and Berlin.

The Weimar Republic, confronted by these dangerous symptoms in the courts of justice, remained inactive as ever. She did not find the courage to dismiss judges who openly had broken the letter and the spirit of the law. She was driven more and more into a corner, and this situation was utilized by the Nazis and the German Nationals combined. Under this pressure she omitted also to use energetic measures against her other opponents, who were not members



The Opponents of the Weimar Republic of any extreme parties. This refers to all who were in office, and who had sworn with their lips the oath to the constitution, without ever serving her faithfully. In 1929 I met, for example, a German consul general, who in sober earnest did not know that the Bismarck constitution of 1871 had been replaced by that of 1919. Another representative of the Foreign Office, known to me in Berlin, reproached me for attacking the Nazis and the *Stahlhelm* (the Iron Helmets), on the ground that "they were not against the State—only against the constitution"; and from an article by one of the most highly gifted of the younger writers, Prince Max von Hohenlohe, published two years ago in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, I extract the following illuminating example.

During a trip in South America his arrival had been reported to the German Consul, by mistake, as that of a Hohenzollern prince. The effect was that the official representative of the German Republic saluted him solemnly as the legitimate heir to the throne of the Hohenzollern, and before the assembled German colony pledged to him his oath of loyalty. The protests on the side of Prince Hohenlohe, and his repeated affirmations that he was no Hohenzollern, were smilingly waved aside as merely manifestations of a royal modesty. Though one might think that such happenings were possible in out-of-the-way places, it is by no means, unfortunately, only there that they occur. In the central republican ministries and in the highest offices of the Republic there were men who at heart were opponents of the Republic.

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This was made plain to me, one day, in a way that left no doubt. I had something to settle with a high official of the Berlin police, the point under discussion being a constitutional problem, not to be solved without the exact text of the Weimar constitution. When I asked him if in his office perhaps a copy might be found, he denied the possession of such a document with no less indignation than if I had accused him of harbouring disease germs. In the course of this book we shall repeatedly meet such cases, and through them the fall of the Weimar Republic was in reality prepared beforehand. Her opponents did not even trouble to behave with any prudence, for so lightly did they estimate her energy that they allowed their own opinion to be readily seen. Perhaps an event may be still remembered that was commented upon at the time by the Press of the whole world.

At a meeting in the former *Herrenhaus* in Berlin, in the summer of 1931, the Prussian Minister for the Interior, Karl Severing, had spoken. When he left the building the people outside cheered, whereupon the Prussian police—a formation under the direct command of Severing himself—arrested and imprisoned a great many people, on the ground that “by their applause for the Minister they had disturbed quiet, order and safety”. Somewhat later there was another case, in which a Republican university student was condemned to three months’ imprisonment because of a demonstration he had made in favour of the Republic. These examples must suffice, for if

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everything of the sort were set down in black and white a whole book would be filled with them.

Among the schoolteachers and university professors, too, there were many more enemies of the Republic than there were friends. In the University of Berlin, for example, there was not a single professor of National Law who was in sympathy with the constitution of the Republic. One of them—Prof. Bornhak—went so far as to revile her in his lectures, in the most abominable manner. He was called before a disciplinary Court and acquitted as “weak of intellect”; but in spite of that he was allowed to continue his work in the same spirit as before. It was the same professor who often urged people to sabotage the constitution, which he described as a “non-binding text of law”. The few Republican professors, on the other hand, were exposed to the worst threats of the students, and the Republic looked on without interfering. As examples of this may be mentioned the names of Prof. Gumbel of Heidelberg, Prof. Kohn of Breslau, Prof. Dehn of Halle, whose theological lectures were made impossible by the terroristic students of the Radical Right. It is astonishing that the Republic has been able to maintain herself for fourteen years, though it shows that her opponents were not of any real importance either. Everything, one almost feels, that is nowadays happening in Germany is meaningless and void, and lacking in any new creative power. To give honour however where honour is due, and to indicate some of the living forces that perhaps in time may become of some importance too, we shall in the

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chapter which follows speak of an Order which in the  
midst of the general ruin kept its allegiance to the  
flag, and which may be represented as perhaps the  
only solid foundation of the Weimar Republic—the  
“Reichsbanner Black-Red-Gold”.

## *Chapter IV*

### The Friend of the Weimar Republic: The Reichsbanner Black-Red-Gold

**M**ore perhaps than any of the political parties, this "Reichsbanner Black-Red-Gold", the "Order of German Soldiers of the War", would have been the appropriate organization by means of which to found and establish the new order of things in Germany. It might have become the nucleus of the future organization of the State, and for that reason we propose to allot it a great deal of space in this book.

It has always seemed to us that the Reichsbanner was more than an ordinary association, and that it therefore should in no way be compared with others, since in political, as well as in spiritual and social relationship, it has the widest opportunities of usefulness for the whole body of the people, and therefore for Germany herself. At least in its development it has grown to that, for when it was founded in February, 1924, to bring about a super-party association of all Republican tendencies, maybe no one had any thought as yet of the strong individual life which would belong to it in a very short time. And well indeed that it was so, as otherwise the Social Democrat party would never have collaborated.

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Anyone who was prepared to give his unconditional support to the Weimar constitution could become a member of the Reichsbanner; and Social Democrats therefore, Democrats, and members of the Centre were all eligible. Later on, members of the State party and Radical Democrats joined. Though there has always been some mystery as to who was its real founder, Otto Hörsing, the *Oberpräsident* (highest administrative rank within a province of Prussia) of Saxony, was by tradition honoured as such. In his hand therefore the control of the Order remained until 1931, and only when Hörsing, through the machinations of the Social Democrat party, had to resign and the leadership came to the Social Democrat Karl Höltermann, second leader of the association up to then and the editor of a newspaper, the latter was more and more considered as having contributed to a large extent to the founding of the Reichsbanner.

According to its statutes the Reichsbanner undertook the following tasks:

It was to instil into the people a Republican spirit, above and beyond all party differences; to train its members to become physically and mentally fit, and to dedicate the power thus acquired to the service of the Republican government for the protection of the Weimar constitution, and for its further development. It is certain that members of the Reichsbanner have done their duty in the fulfilment of these obligations, and that what the official leaders of the State have omitted from the beginning has been supplied

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by them. The Order carried the black-red-gold supreme symbols into the most remote corners, brought life and movement to the masses of the indifferent, and formed the indispensable basis for every political action of the Republican parties. Its strength was that at least theoretically it was not dependent on these, and that it united its members on a spiritual basis, so that they were not exclusively guided from material points of view or towards a material objective. Among its ranks a comradeship and loyalty towards each other were found that united men of the most various political views in a way that was strikingly effective.

The Reichsbanner has made great human sacrifices to its ideal, hundreds of its members having been murdered or severely wounded, from political motives. Undertaking all the burden and all the sacrifices of the election campaigns, it has provided protection for the platforms, without which the addresses of Republican candidates could never have been delivered; it has gone canvassing and recruiting, providing for the ministers of the Weimar State a background of power, of which, more is the pity, they made all too little use; and herein lay the whole tragedy of the Order. In a leading article "Reichsbanner and the Crisis of the State", published on the first of August, 1931, in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, I have already touched on these matters. What was foretold and feared then has now actually occurred, and to understand the situation properly it may be as well to recall something of what happened.

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Acting with more speed than any of the political parties, the Reichsbanner, since the first great electoral success of the Nazis, on the fourteenth of September, 1930, has done everything that had been neglected in the palmy days of the Republic. And all those, who even after that day did not know what was at stake, had no right to reproach the Reichsbanner with the fact that after the first results of the early years of its foundation it had fallen back more or less to inactivity. With a courage, to be valued rightly only by those who knew the petrified ideology of the Social Democrat party in all military matters, the Reichsbanner has in quite a short time raised its formations to a very high level of efficiency, and has made them a real instrument of power.

This evolution happened in the winter of 1930-31, when the fittest young men were united to special groups, afterwards known by the name of *Schutzformationen*, or abbreviated *Schufo* (protectionary formations). Out of them a sort of highly disciplined militia, fit for all purposes of defence, was trained, perfectly suited to every system that was based solely on defence and not on attack. In that same winter, by the Reichsbanner only, more than a thousand meetings were held; but nobody paid any attention. About even the paltriest assemblies of the Nazis, the Republican Press gave the most detailed information, but it was dumb whensoever the Reichsbanner undertook anything. They may perhaps have felt convinced that these people were reliable and doing their best, and that therefore it was not necessary to waste words on



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them, but they overlooked the fact that no organized society, not even the best of them, can continue its existence unless it finds its support among the people. To foster and supply such support should have been the task of the Press and, above all, the liberally inclined middle class should have been reminded of its duties towards the Reichsbanner. But it was apparently taken as a matter of course that the 95% proletarian members of the Reichsbanner should be the champions of the Democratic State and not of the war of the classes, and it was seemingly supposed that this state of things would continue for ever. As an outcome of this supercilious and arrogant attitude considerable tension resulted in the Reichsbanner during the last years of the Republic, and it became even doubtful whether its work was not after all without either appreciation or use.

Not only did the Reichsbanner obtain no support. From the very first day it was violently attacked, and from the side of the Communists this was only natural. Many Social Democrats of the Left, however, also turned against the so-called "Reichsbanner ideology", which they suspected of capturing proletarian tendencies for bourgeois ends, or for tactics dangerous to the party. They held the opinion that the fight for the Republic should not have precedence over the fight for Socialism, and so they adopted every conceivable manoeuvre to take the wind out of the sails of the Reichsbanner. The Right, on the other hand, conducted the campaign against the Reichsbanner with the assumption that it was in

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reality an army of the Marxists in disguise, and even in the ranks of the Centre it was currently held that the new organization would prove of use only to the Social Democrat party. As far as this view was held in the Centre, one might argue that an order, not even represented in Parliament, could never compete with a party, as its foundations and ideas were altogether different, and that the various parties of the Republic had all been much strengthened by means of the Reichsbanner. In practice this account of things proved to be true, when even the party committee of the Social Democrats began to attack the Reichsbanner, and when at the ensuing election an immediate and considerable loss of votes could be noticed. The position of the Reichsbanner therefore became difficult, and it was indeed remarkable that its members should have been able to put up with it.

The Order was compelled to suffer not only attacks from outside, but also and above all things the lack of capable leaders of the higher grades. For some time these were sought for from among the old and worn-out party leaders of the Social Democrats—men who were naturally sometimes apt to feel that they were under greater obligations towards the party than towards the order. The supreme leadership itself had no succession of competent men whatever. Though as to character Otto Hörsing was worthy of every respect, he was altogether inadequate when it came to a question of choosing his coöperators. The ruling clique, which at Magdeburg, the headquarters

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of the Reichsbanner, held the reins, barred the way to the entrance of new men; jealously it stood on guard so that nobody should intrude upon its rights, and even under Höltermann things have not changed very much. It was chance alone that lifted him into this prominent position, which was beyond the competence of his fossilized and untalented bureaucratic mind. It is his doing that the only brain the Reichsbanner had in its higher offices, the *Gaufferer* (district leader) of Berlin-Brandenburg, Arthur Neidhardt, did not exercise the influence that should have properly been his.

It is necessary at this point to be a little more explicit about this somewhat remarkable personality, in order to render more comprehensible the part he played on the twentieth of July, 1932. Arthur Neidhardt had been a sailor originally, and he made no secret of the fact that he was not a member of the educated and well-bred classes. On this very account, perhaps, he was an agreeable exception among the new and newer upstarts of the Republic. In his hours of leisure he carved for his little daughter clocks and chests, toys and wooden swords. He was one of the few who possessed political sensibility and courage, and he was a good judge of men; and German politics might possibly have taken a different course if the envy of the Social Democrat party had not denied to him still higher functions than he already had. Even now, after the Nazi upheaval, he is one of the men of whom great things may be expected for the future of Germany, and therefore to him and not to Karl

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Höltermann the German people will have to make their appeal. Under the leadership of Arthur Neidhardt, the Berlin-Brandenburg Reichsbanner became one of the best of the whole Order—and this, in spite of the fact that the leaders at Magdeburg, prompted by the jealousy of Berlin that is only too common among the citizens of provincial towns, did all they could to frustrate it.

It seemed of more importance to the people of Magdeburg that they should build a stadium costing a million marks in their own town than that the necessary funds should be put at the disposal of the black-red-gold militia formations of the capital. From time to time Höltermann visited Berlin, and delivered there, in the Democratic Club, one or other of his famous addresses, the astounding terminology of which seemed to be taken out of an encyclopaedia. With the mien of the magician in the well-known story by Thomas Mann, he discussed all sorts of things, from the position of soldiers in the front line to the friendship of Spain for the Reichsbanner. But he always foretold the inevitable end of the Nazi party, hinted at the same time, too, that the chief merit of this would be his, because of his cool and yet passionate nature. Then a few sentences would follow about freedom and justice—and the outcome of it all was simply nothing! People who had listened to the lecture, Democratic politicians, the Press, authors, well-to-do Jews, thought at the end of the evening that they had really been doing great things for the State; and because Höltermann was more

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than a little exciting, yet did not in the least disturb their own equanimity, they respected him and thought him a capable person, on whom the Republic could absolutely rely. And that is what the Republic did, with the foreseen result.

Sometimes on such an evening a film would be thrown on the screen—for instance, “Life in the Reichsbanner”—and then everybody would rejoice that he was so closely allied to the proletariat, and that this Democratic State of theirs was still so full of vitality. Those were melancholy hours, and one only went there, in spite of all temporary self-deception, because it seemed impossible that so much emptiness could exist. The good Republican Scouts, who as a rule were present too, were much to be pitied; and along with them the whole youth of Germany, who were trying to find their place in the Republic, but who from their leaders received nothing but cheap and empty phrases.

I first became acquainted with the Reichsbanner in July 1930. I was not yet a member then, and came only as a guest of one of its *Junghanner* (youth-sections) of the Berlin-Kreuzberg district, and I was introduced by one of the subeditors of the *Vossische Zeitung*. To him had been confided the task of making palatable to the Berlin proletarians the unification of the Democratic party with the exceedingly undemocratic, originally Right-radical, *Jungdeutschen Orden* (Order of Young Germans)—a task he attempted with skill, but in which he achieved little success. A few days afterwards I met the Reichsbanner for the second

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time, at a meeting in the north of Berlin, and there the inner tension between the mentality of the Order and that of the Social Democratic party was shown to the full. The Social Democrat Colonel of the Police, Lange, made a speech, at the beginning of which he said he "did not wish to make a murderers' den of his red heart", and therefore urged all to fight for the Social Democrat party, and he warned everybody against the reactionary tendencies of the Centre.

The result was that a violent conflict ensued with a young Reichsbannerman, who belonged to the Centre, and who warned Colonel Lange that such an attitude as his would drive all members of the Centre out of the Reichsbanner. During the last years of the Republic this was actually seen to be happening more and more. The effect this meeting had on me was that I almost gave up my intention of becoming a member; but, as the election campaign of that summer proceeded, the plainer it became to me that the Reichsbanner, and above all its non-Social Democratic forces, ought to be supported, in order for the sake of Germany to give to the anti-Nazi front the broadest possible basis. The celebrations of the anniversary of the Constitution, on the tenth and eleventh of August, 1930, are among my most vivid recollections. The endless torchlight processions of the Reichsbanner, and in the wake of them those hundreds of thousands of the people, inspired me with a feeling that it was here and not elsewhere that my battle must be fought. Besides, I had already for

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many years cherished the idea of a large organization of Youth, that might perchance become the basis of a new inner mentality of the people. With the help of the surging masses of the Reichsbanner, so it seemed to me, this idea might gain ground. In July and August my first political articles had appeared in the *Vossische Zeitung*, evoking instant and indignant protests from the Nazis. So the moment seemed propitious for yet a further step. Then the elections of the fourteenth of September brought about a perfectly plain situation, and showed how tottering the Republic already was, and that it was nothing but the law of inertia that prevented her from breaking asunder. A hundred and seven Nazis and seventy-seven Communists had been elected for Parliament, and now one might hope that an awakening was at hand for the Republic—and yet, with the exception of the Reichsbanner, it was no more than a half-sleep that dawned on them.

The opening of the Reichstag was to be on the thirteenth of October, and I was reliably informed that the Nazis were prepared for all manner of activity. On the evening of the eleventh, therefore, I telephoned to my friend N. and told him of my plan, which was that we should go at once, by car, to Magdeburg, to inform Otto Hörsing, and to ask him what he intended to do against the danger threatening the capital. At first N. refused, for he thought they would have been well informed at Magdeburg as to these matters for some time past, and that we should therefore only be making ourselves ridiculous.

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I insisted, however, and we started. The next morning we spoke with Otto Hörsing, who showed a good deal of understanding. In contrast to Karl Höltermann, who two years earlier had told my friend that the best thing he could do for the Republic was to become a member of the rowing division of the Reichsbanner, Hörsing promised us all possible support, and made an appointment with us for the fourteenth of October at the Prussian Diet. As to the threatening disturbances, however, he could not be persuaded to take any special precautions. Not, certainly, because our information was already known to him, and because he had decided to treat the matter lightly, but simply because he was incredulous. We almost felt a sort of satisfaction, therefore, when on our way back to Berlin we heard at Brandenburg of the violent collisions that had occurred on the thirteenth of October in the Leipziger Strasse and in the Potsdamer Platz. The result was that Hörsing welcomed us more wholeheartedly than he may have originally intended, and with a special recommendation from him we entered for the first time, on the fifteenth of October, the office of the "Gau" direction of the Berlin-Brandenburg Reichsbanner, where we were received by Neidhardt, who for a beginning was somewhat reticent.

I told him what motives made me wish to become a member, and immediately the task was confided to us of strengthening the propaganda campaign of the Reichsbanner. My card of membership bore as date of entrance the sixteenth of October 1930. A



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day or two afterwards I handed to Neidhardt a memorandum, setting forth the necessity of founding an order of the Youth of the Reich, superior to all parties, the *Vortrupp Schwarz-Rot-Gold* (Vanguard Black-Red-Gold). Its structure was to be democratic, culminating however in an authoritative leadership, and it was to be formed as an autonomous body within the circumference of the Reichsbanner itself. I knew that an organization of Youth should never be allowed to account itself a mere step to an association of its elders. But as the Reichsbanner, in its ideal at least, was more than an ordinary organization, an order for Youth, created by it, and included within its own borders, might have become a representation of the entire Youth of Germany. As the committee of the Reichsbanner, out of lack of imagination and fear of the Social Democrat party, remained absolutely inactive with regard to these plans, it was the Berlin-Brandenburg Reichsbanner on which I had to rely exclusively. This plan of mine has found its first realization in 1932, in the "Vanguard Black-Red-Gold", about which I shall have to speak more explicitly, as it differs greatly both in structure and aim from all other organizations.

Some readers, perhaps, may find matter for amusement in the statement that the function of "Leader of German Youth", established immediately by the Nazis after their coming into power, is based directly on my ideas, having been communicated to the party committee by one of my former subordinates in the

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Vanguard. I am far from regretting this, however, nor do I propose to regard it as a tragical happening. The organization of Youth in the Third Reich shows only too plainly that an idea alone is not sufficient, when it is put into active use without proper knowledge of its spiritual preliminaries.

The Reichsbanner as a protective formation of the Republic could thus have had real importance if the Republic had made use of it: but this she has done only in a very small degree. For some years there lay, for instance, in the office files of the Berlin *Gau* Committee, lists with the selected names out of which the Republic should have recruited her auxiliary police; but amid the confusions of a thousand negotiations and the clashes of multitudinous scruples the deed was never done. The Prussian ministers believed that in the regular police they had a power sufficiently strong to resist all attacks that might be made by the opponents of the State. They felt, when others tried to persuade them to enlarge the democratic military power of the State, that it was an insult to their Democratic conscience.

Officially they were members of the Reichsbanner, and were spoken of as "Comrade Severing", "Comrade Otto Braun", "Comrade Grimme", etc., but this never really meant anything. They came to the meetings, and they delivered speeches, but even on such occasions they managed with inordinate skill to offend the Reichsbanner, as when, over and over again, it was emphasized by Severing that his police were completely efficient and that he did not want

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support from any quarter. With an iron consistency, which he lacked in all other respects, he has stuck to this idea—to the ruin of the Republic! And so a situation was created, most fatal for organized bodies: always to live in tension, always to be comforted with hopes for the future, always to hear they need not be in any doubt, in the hour of danger they will be called sure enough to the rescue—and then nothing ever happens! When under Brüning the crisis of the State entered an acute stage in which all uniforms and badges were forbidden, no exception was made of the Reichsbanner. One has never quite understood the precise purpose of these decrees, which brought the most faithful friends of the Government into line with her worst enemies. We have pleaded in vain for an altered and more sensible attitude, but it never went beyond promises and consolations, and there has never been any practical result.

In the meantime the gulf between the Social Democrat party and the Reichsbanner was widening more and more. The ideology of the Reichsbanner, which has already been mentioned, was the chief reason for this. There was a great deal of regret that men should be divided into so many contending parties, and it was the ideal of the Reichsbanner to arrive at unity outside and beyond their narrower limits. It was necessary for its well-being that it should not be content merely to ward off danger, but that it should enforce the doctrine that a State is properly alive only when the love of the people goes

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out to it, and when it can constantly renew itself out of its own substance. So it took up the idea of "voluntary labour", for which it had to fight strenuously against the Social Democrats, and for some time against the trade unions also. Previous to the formation of these groups it had understood the ethical and educational value of working camps, that brought together under a common leadership young people from all parties; and even the Nazi autocrats, at the conclusion of the working camp of the Reichsbanner, had been obliged to acknowledge its excellence.

It met with the same resistance in regard to the military training by which the Republican youth was to be prepared, none too early, for action on behalf of the State, for the Social Democrats more or less believed that the working-out of Democracy was to be accomplished by passive means as far as possible, and they were constantly laying stress on the employment of "spiritual arms"—by which they meant a sticking to the old and obsolete party methods, and that at an hour when in the S.A. (*Sturmabteilungen*), S.S. (*Sturmstalleln*) and the *Stahlhelm*, there were already fully trained formations waiting for their orders, against which the Republic could oppose nothing of equal efficiency.

Under the influence of the Social Democrat party everything was denied to the Reichsbanner which properly it ought to have had. Weapons it had none, and its demonstrations were compulsorily reduced to a minimum. Perhaps a beautiful and moral idea was at the bottom of all this; but in these decisive years it

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amounted almost to suicide. However, the full description of the situation was left to Karl Höltermann, who, in March 1933, gave as his opinion that the best policy for the Reichsbanner was to pretend to be dead. He did not know that this attitude had already long ago brought about death. It is astonishing how strongly the members, in spite of everything, held together up to the end—and beyond that, to the vexation of the Nazis. "Fight for the Republic" was no longer an inspiring battlecry, for piece by piece had been broken from her, with not a hand lifted in her defence. What was there left to defend?

The Weimar constitution? Of that only paragraph 48 remained. Perhaps the "Republican" governments, in which Monarchists, anti-Democrats, big capitalists and mortal enemies of the State had a seat? The ministers of the Prussian Government, who at every opportunity disowned the Reichsbanner, until in the end they were chased away by three men and a lieutenant? Or perhaps the "venerable figure" of the president of the Reich, von Hindenburg, for the election of whom the Reichsbanner had sacrificed the life and health of many of its comrades, and who therefore entered a league with Herr von Papen, Adolf Hitler, and the noble donors of the estates of Neudeck and Langenau? With a refreshing gust of bitter self-irony the Reichsbanner Press has confessed these things. It published a cartoon in which were many coffins with ribbons in black-red-gold, on which the shadow of Hindenburg fell, and under this was written: "Faithfulness is the marrow of honour."

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Although these words had been spoken by the Herr Reichspräsident himself, yet the newspaper was suppressed for many weeks, and only when it had declared that there was never any intention of insulting Hindenburg was it allowed to appear again. No, there was hardly anything left that might have given cause for enthusiasm, and all the more highly on that account must the sense of duty which characterized the members of the Reichsbanner be esteemed—they were fighting for a Republic that no longer existed, yet they were full of a faith that it was necessary to remain at their posts, for before the eyes of even the poorest of the unemployed there was the dreaded vision of the coming Nazi bondage. They knew that the most pitiful remnants of their democracy were always better than what would come after it. It was this inner stability that the Nazis knew and hated; and because of it, after Hitler's coming into power, more than all others, hundreds if not thousands of Reichsbannermen have been slaughtered by the S.A.

The account I have here given of the Reichsbanner is not a fanciful one, for I have come to know it down to the very last details; as also I knew its weak points, that had their origin in faulty organization. It was formed on a "local club" system, the name in itself being almost fatal in advance. At the head was the "president of the local club", the word "leader" being adopted only at a much later period. Not until the Democratic Republic was nearing her end did they begin to lay more stress on the com-

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petence of the real, that is the military leaders, instead of on that of the local club committees. But there, too, things were only done by halves. It was strictly forbidden, then as before, to bring a single leader into prominence, and so there was never established any real relationship between them and the masses. The following little episode is an example of this.

To our camp in July, 1932, Arthur Neidhardt came one day, and delivered an address which was greatly appreciated by all—and this, although the boys never had heard his name, in spite of the fact that nearly all of them came from Reichsbanner families. After he had gone, they inquired who this very pleasant man might be, and I answered, on purpose, to see what the effect would be: “He is a *Gau* secretary”—a title and an idea that meant nothing at all to them. And so it was with everything. Only a few miles away from Berlin, nobody knew anything about the personality of the leaders, for they had been marked down deliberately as impersonal functionaries. Perhaps, after all, this was better than the ultimate spasmodic effort to weave a myth round Karl Höltermann, for he was the most inappropriate object for this, and it was felt only too painfully as a poor imitation of the National Socialists, when the Reichsbanner paper suddenly appeared with the headline: “Front-linesman Karl Höltermann”.

This lack of understanding on the part of the Republicans for all things psychological was also shown plainly at every election or public demonstration.

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Whereas the opponents of the State used all available means, and arranged for their meetings to be enlivened by bands of music, it happened only too often with the Reichsbanner that neither song nor cheering brought the evening to an end. People went home as they had come, sometimes without even taking with them the memory of a black-red-gold banner, for which they were supposed to be fighting.

The outsider, and still more perhaps the non-German, will wonder that such external matters are so continuously dwelt upon, but they were indeed of great importance. To the German, symbols and songs mean a great deal, and he has need of them to bind him more closely to the ideas for which they stand. And I do not count this to his discredit, for those who do not already understand should try to realize that it was the universal Roman symbolism, as conditioned by the German mentality, that for almost a thousand years gave inner and outer maintenance to the Western world. Therefore, as a German politician, one has to reckon with this special tendency, that is capable of bearing rich fruit; though when it is not taken into account, or is left for the use of self-seeking adventurers, it may become fatal—and this is what happened in Germany. That the Republic ignored these simple laws of psychological tactics may be explained once more by her mistaken Puritanism, that sought for a common-sense solution of all things, where heart and feelings ought to have been allowed a voice. With the parties, this lack of comprehension was far more prominent still than with



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the Reichsbanner; for the latter, at least later on, tried to some extent to make good even in this respect, and it would have been possible even then to have achieved a few things, had it not been handicapped all the time by the Social Democrat party. As the most active unit it still had to confront problems changing every day that could not be solved by theoretical dogmatics.

That was the reason why old members of the Social Democrat party clung with a greater love to the Reichsbanner than to their more narrow political organization, as I have noticed countless times. I have spoken at many meetings of the Reichsbanner, in the Ruhr district and in the Rhineland, in Baden, Württemberg, Brunswick, Bremen, Posen, and last though not least in Berlin and in the province of Brandenburg. On a tour as a speaker in the industrial districts of the West of Germany I have nearly every day witnessed fights in the lecture-rooms—with steel rods and indiarubber sticks the S.A. men used to beat the public ferociously, and often the organizers of the meetings were so little efficient that it almost came to a breaking up of the assemblies. That this break-up was invariably avoided and that the meetings were able to go on was due to the personal courage of the Reichsbannermen alone, whose strength seemed to be increased by the bitterness with which they saw, among the S.A. men, proletarian classmates who, led astray or bought by money, had become the henchmen of social reaction.

Still more difficult was it for them to understand

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when in the last year of the Republic the party committee also of the Social Democrats became one of its opponents.

From August 1932 till its end, this committee seemed to have no other work to do than to oppose the Reichsbanner in every way, the two points at issue being the Vanguard and the question of Wehrsport (athletics). The Social Democrat party was highly offended with the Reichsbanner, because its attitude towards the Minister for National Defence (afterwards Chancellor of the Reich), von Schleicher, was based on common sense and a policy of realities. For it was plain to the Reichsbanner that it would have to participate at all costs in the courses of physical training established by the government of the Reich. It said rightly that this training should not be left solely to one's opponents, but that, on the contrary, it was necessary to enlist also the young power of the Republic and that in such a matter theoretical scruples were out of place. At that time it almost came to a rupture between party and Reichsbanner—things had already gone so far that the *Vorwärts* published exhortations against the Reichsbanner, and the local committee of the Berlin Social Democrats passed a resolution making it the duty of every Social Democrat in the Reichsbanner to work against the Vanguard, the competition of which against its own badly conducted Youth organization was feared by the party.

The part Höltermann played at that time has never been made quite clear. In the matter of the

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Wehrsport he at first seemed to stand on the side of the Reichsbanner; but in the end he gave way and made a promise to exclude the Reichsbanner from the courses which were subsidized by the State. I remember a meeting in the *Gau* committee of the Reichsbanner in Berlin, in which Höltermann in a pitiful voice, almost choked with tears, declared that the Reichsbanner had to give up its point of view. This address made a deep impression on the whole audience, with the exception of myself; but it soon became plain to everybody that Höltermann only wanted to cloak his fear of the party and his betrayal of the Reichsbanner in a garment of beautiful and empty words. And therein lies the last tragedy of the Order. He would only then have had the necessary vitality, if in practice also he had been free from the influence of the Social Democratic party; but his independence was on paper only, while in reality it was at every moment infringed upon. What was the use of proclaiming, beating one's chest, that as an active military formation one need not take any orders from the high and mighty of the Social Democratic party, if in the end one did all that was demanded by them?

However, the members of the Centre in the higher leadership of the Reichsbanner are not without guilt either. They had let go whatever influence they had held, so that they were not in a position to undertake even the most insignificant action. It looked very much as if they were there only as a sort of ornament, since they were no longer of any real importance. The

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party of the Centre also did not as such behave wisely; for it would have been easy for them to gain enormous influence over the Reichsbanner: the Social Democrats, fearful of responsibility, would gladly enough have left the field to them; but, as they of their own will had stood aside, we need not wonder that in the end only the committee of the Social Democratic party remained, interfering with the measures taken by the Reichsbanner. Perhaps they are going on in the same way still; for I have heard that the Prague committee of the former Social Democrat party strenuously opposes the collaboration of the Reichsbannermen. They have learnt and forgotten nothing.

The first true and genuine popular movement of this sort that Germany ever had—the Reichsbanner—through the fault of the Republic and her political parties was carried to its burial. It was not our intention to give any full description of all that the Reichsbanner had done during the nine years of its existence. We wished only to indicate the forces that were alive in it, and in the name of Germany to utter a protest against all and everything that brought about its weakness and its breakdown. Yet it had to be emphasized that its members were free from any blame that might be laid upon them. They have done their duty with the greatest sacrifices, and with an unexampled idealism. Everyone who marched in the ranks of the Reichsbanner and who, different from the honourable men of the “National Socialist revolution”, did not ask for wages or advantage, deserves

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the warmest gratitude of the nation. Let it be his consolation that what he has achieved has not really been lost. It will live on and at a later period bear fruit. But only when no longer shall those have any influence who were not able to accept at its proper value the instrument given to them for the building up of the new State.

## *Chapter V*

### The Political and Social Structure of the Weimar Constitution and National Socialism

**A**fter having spoken in a series of chapters of the Republic and the forces opposing her, and mentioned several times the Weimar constitution, it seems time to give at last a more elaborate description of this constitution. The objection may possibly be made, that it might have been better to begin with it; but we do not think that it would have been of any advantage to behave as if this were a lecture on jurisprudence. It was more important to give first a general survey, out of which it would be easy for the reader to reconstruct for himself the position belonging to the Weimar constitution in post-war Germany.

It may be that another and very practical reason caused me not to place this chapter earlier in the book, inasmuch as during the last few years of political work in Germany we have already had to reckon with the fact that of the Weimar constitution there is in reality very little left. It was not in the spring of 1933 that the edifice, which the men of Weimar had intended to build, began to totter. Its

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dilapidation had begun already when, after the September elections of 1930, a regular parliamentary majority was no longer possible in the German Reichstag, and the government of the Reichschancellor Brüning could only sustain itself by help of the Social Democrat party. It is obvious, therefore, why one who has witnessed all these things should have preferred to deal with the real facts and occurrences in Germany before dealing in greater detail with the written law-texts of the constitution. This does not imply, of course, that the Weimar constitution was of no particular importance: on the contrary—until far into the Third Reich—when the Weimar constitution formally was still in existence (as it still is today), I always maintained that it had to be protected absolutely as a necessary preliminary for the German future.

This Weimar constitution, put forth as it was at a most difficult time of distress, when in the whole country starvation and destitution and armed insurrection raged, could credit itself with the continuation of the development of Germany in a beneficial and positive way, as it had been begun under the rule of the Bismarck constitution of the sixteenth of April, 1871.

Above all, it gave the promise of a new and solid basis, and without it Germany in the years of 1919-23 would only have been submerged in the chaos of anarchy. For the first time in German history it happened that by law the sovereignty, as such, was given to the German people not only as a participation in

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the ruling of a State, but as their right. The first article of the constitution, "The German Reich is a Republic. The sovereignty resides in the people" created a new attitude towards all things in public life such as had of necessity been unknown in the Germany of earlier days. In the practical realization of these first theses the Weimar constitution has consolidated the political rights of the German people in a spirit of liberality such as until then had not been the case in any country of the world. The electoral age was lowered to 20 years, and birth, class and name were no longer to play any part in the qualifications for leadership. But here also, although the constitution remained on a level with other already existing examples of parliamentary States, there was for Germany a fundamental innovation.

To understand this, it must be remembered that up to November, 1918, in Prussia, which covers two-thirds of Germany, there existed an electoral law based on three classes, graduated according to income, and therefore practically denying to the large masses of the people any political influence. There were even principalities in Germany—the two grand-dukedoms of Mecklenburg, that up to 1918 knew nothing of any parliamentary representation whatever, but were ruled according to the statutes of the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

To the inner divisions of Germany, also, the Weimar constitution brought a fundamental change. The Germany of Bismarck had been formed out of the



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confederacy of each of the ruling princes, so that at least in theory the opportunity was given to dissolve the German Reich by a counteraction. In the Weimar constitution the relation between the State as a whole, and its several parts, was fundamentally changed. The central power of the German Reich obtained increased influence, without abolishing the individuality of the countries which it included. In Hitler Germany, as everyone knows, this evolution has been carried on with a leap, so that today German states cannot properly be said to exist any longer. Anyone who views these things from outside may consider them as something positive, but in reality it is otherwise; for, different from other countries, Germany is a unit as to nationality and destiny, but she is not united in culture or in things spiritual. Germany, compacted of various nationalities, needs freedom of motion if she is to build up a living organism as a whole.

In this book it is often asserted that Germany's mission lies in her being the herald of the Universal European Idea; and this task is reflected in the inner structure of the country, containing as it does the most various civilizations, and the most various ideals, bound together only by a common destiny. The Weimar constitution was therefore following a far better road than the one afterwards taken by Hitler. It has tried to introduce a system of unconditional and just balance, within the organism of the State as well as among the various classes of the people. What proved fatal to it was that, according to its theory, it was

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convinced of the good will of all, and that its creators and representatives would not acknowledge that this perfect balance must necessarily lead, among other possibilities of contention in the State, to a victory of the most radical parties.

Besides the political the constitution also tried to create a just social system, and possibly this is of greater interest even than its political structure, for in the future also a great part of the struggle for supremacy in Germany will be fought on economical lines.

It was because the constitution of Weimar wished to take into consideration the changed attitude of post-war times that it decreed Art. 151: "The system of economical life must be made conformable to the theses of justice, in an endeavour to provide a truly human existence for all." And again in Art. 153: "Ownership implies obligations; and whatever is owned and used must simultaneously be at the service of the common welfare of all." So it had become obvious to them that the system, valid until then, that was founded on the unlimited supremacy of the possessing classes, could no longer be endured. The people, that for four years had been fighting in the War, had a claim to a more righteous distribution of the national wealth, and one need not be a Socialist to come to these conclusions. Above all others it was the youth of all classes that made itself a mouthpiece for social demands, and in which a fervent wish was alive to transcend, by their own endeavours, all dividing class differences.

The idea of common working camps for all classes

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and orders, as it was perhaps first taken up by the so-called "*Jung-Deutscher Order*" and by the Reichsbanner, working congresses of students and workmen combined, all this indicated that also in the bourgeois ranks a new spirit was developing. These were by no means revolutionary tendencies, for what was planned was to be realized within the framework of the social regulations of the Weimar constitution. It was to conform to its spirit and its wording, to submit the capitalistic system, valid until then, to a reformation; and large sections of the population very soon did not any longer understand how it was possible to overlook these urgent demands. Under the influence of the Weimar constitution, this feeling became so strong that gradually there was no longer any party which would have dared openly to confront the people without some social activities in its programme.

Even Dr. Hugenberg, one of Germany's most influential and certainly most outspoken capitalists, began to speak of ethical-social demands, and it is said that he even at one time used a phrase about the German Nationals having "Socialism as their aim, though naturally in such a form as the kings of Prussia had put into practice". With these words he threw to the Nazis the straw to which they could cling, after their coming into power, and with this slogan they beguiled the disillusioned masses, waiting for Socialism.

After the War, the whole of Germany felt as one great mass feeling the "anticapitalistic longing of the people", as Gregor Strasser, formerly the closest col-

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laborator of Hitler, has put it, and no group dared stand outside. The only ones who, to a limited extent, managed to do so were the Social Democrats, whose newspapers were full of the most violent attacks on the capitalistic system though, wherever action was needed, they were useless, in this as in everything else. Only in the beginning, in November 1918, they had found the necessary energy to announce, in the so-called "Proclamation of the delegates of the people", that "the government emanating from the Revolution is purely socialistic and has for its aim the realization of the entire Socialistic programme". The Reichs Court of Justice moreover, in a resolution, once made the statement that this proclamation was of legal authority; but, as the Court of Justice was less than other institutions affected by the altered condition of the nation, it wisely omitted to accept the sentence mentioned here as a binding legal standard.

The Exhortation of the Delegates, moreover, made the position of the Court of Justice very simple for, in the same decree that spoke of Socialism, the inviolability of property was guaranteed, and so the Socialists protected here the very thing they had pretended to attack in the preface. Many inner crises of the Social Democrat party can be explained by this, for from the younger generation this irresolute attitude met with special resistance. Matters went so far as to create a sharp distinction between Social Democrats and Socialists. These statements are of some importance, for when the Social Democrat party proved itself incapable of solving this problem, to-

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gether with the national, there was no longer a group left in the ranks of the faithful adherents of the constitution to satisfy the anticapitalistic longing of the people. Perhaps some Democrats of the Left, and the Trade Union wing of the Centre, still held fast to a train of thought which in the end led the way to a remodelling of the more or less intact social structure; but this was not sufficient, for the Weimar constitution lost its most essential basis by this readiness towards compromise of the Social Democrats, who abandoned without a struggle all that the constitution had promised. And so it was easy for National Socialism to occupy the field, when it made Socialism the chief of its demands, and uttered the propaganda cry of "Death to Marxism, that Socialism may live!"

Nazi agitation appealed to all who wanted to improve their material position, without having either to take sides with the proletarians, or to admit that they had already been proletarianized. The *petits bourgeois*, the small craftsmen and tradespeople, small farmers and peasants, came to the Hakenkreuz, since the Nazis understood how to let Socialism begin at that level—on the level of these people—whereas with the Marxian method of attaining Socialism they would have had to begin by coming down to the proletarian point of view.

National Socialism made Socialism acceptable to Society, and it was possible now, even fashionable, to call oneself a Socialist, without thereby becoming an outcast, or being thought a madman. It was a perfectly harmless beginning, for Hitler's Socialism had

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no theory, and no solid doctrine as its basis, and so there was no difficulty at all about interpreting it as seemed most fit at the moment. Today, as everybody knows, the official version of the Third Reich has achieved the following definition: "Socialism means only the making of sacrifices! It has nothing whatever to do with a change in the economical situation. Socialism it was that resounded in the goose step of the Prussian grenadiers!" This seems all very simple! Why should one not be able to alter a word here and there as one pleases? What can hinder us, from tomorrow onwards, from calling an appletree a vegetable marrow, and a marrow an appletree? In ordinary affairs, of course, it is fraudulent to use in a special sense words which in their usual interpretation bear quite a different one; but politics, at least as long as they flourish, would seem to be far beyond such limitations of their radius of action.

What could the Republic, conformably to the idea of her constitution, have done in Germany, in the way of social justice? First, a salutary balance between town and country should have been found, though this would have been possible only if at the same time the whole of agriculture had been reformed. For her neglect of this, the Republic as a rule proposed to offer the excuse that she had never received the authority necessary for carrying through her intentions—which was by no means the truth. Not only at the very beginning, but also later on, it would have been quite possible for her, supported as she was by the unanimous sentiment of the people, to

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have done whatever she desired. The lawful basis was laid down in the constitution itself, in Art. 155/II, which said: "Land, the acquisition of which is necessary for the supply of residences, for the advancement of colonization and for fertilization, or the improvement of agriculture, can be expropriated." Of this stipulation practically no use whatever has been made. Not only were the proprietors of large estates left unmolested: the Republic gave further aid to sustain them also materially in their contest against the State, with subsidies of more than a thousand million of marks. The scandals of the *Osthilfe* (Help for the East) have become so widely known by means of various excellent writings, that it is unnecessary to make any further mention of them here; though because of the connection of this chapter with that concerning the twentieth of July, 1932, it must be remembered that Chancellor Brüning was brought down by the agrarian caste, to whom President von Hindenburg had pledged himself body and soul, at the very moment when he wanted to begin with the splitting up of the large estates, mortgaged for more than they were worth. And when afterwards General von Schleicher tried once more to take up Brüning's interrupted course of action, and impose his will through the exposure of the enormous corruption in the so-called "national" circles, he was speedily put aside by the handing over of the power to Adolf Hitler, and the entire question of the Eastern Help disappeared from public gaze. Thus did Hitler, at least in the beginning of his rule, exercise positive influence on

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agriculture, though not on the small and middle tenants!

Wherever the Republic, on the other hand, found the courage to do something, she was too timid to mention it. The colonization of the Prussian State, for example, was magnificent. Men like the Secretary of State, Krüger, on the Prussian Board for Agriculture, or his personal representative, Kolb, did all that men could do, and the success was in proportion. As early as 1931, in a leading article in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, I was able to make the statement that the impoverished post-war Prussia had done more after the revolution for colonization than the Kingdom of Prussia in 50 years. But who ever heard of it? It remained unknown, and so carried no political weight. Nor did the fact that in Mecklenburg-Strelitz, formerly the most backward and reactionary country in Germany, under the rule of the Social Democrat Minister, Baron von Reibnitz, the most modern and best-managed colonies had been created, ever become known to the public at large. Much the same can be said of all provinces in which the Republic did any reconstructive work. Here too it was lack of psychology, for which the Weimar State never even sought to have any understanding, although the social question particularly to a great extent depends on it. Out of her inner weakness, however, the Republic had an immense respect for all those who called themselves specialists—for economic experts, and “leaders of business”, for general managers and bank directors. Their judgement meant so much to her that she gladly gave up her



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own, and even tolerated Cabinets, in which the government was left to these glorious professionals. We need only remember the Cabinet of Reichskanzler Kuno, which brought for Germany the inflation, and many other evils.

The Republic had behaved, from the beginning, as though a State born out of a Socialist movement is prohibited from showing its sympathy with those ninety-seven per cent of the population who are Socialists, or at least Socialistically inclined, but is obliged, on the other hand, to show every consideration for the remaining three per cent; and so it was no wonder that, under the rule of the Weimar constitution, the masses became ever more disillusioned, and in the end ceased to expect anything from it whatever. It would have been the most opportune moment for Communism, if the Nazis had not contrived by their magic to persuade the people that there was a yet shorter way to the goal, and here we have the reason why so many former Communists are now in the "brown" ranks—the same goal, only by a shorter road!

They did not go to Hitler because of some sudden revelation such as that vision of the Master which befell St. Paul on the Damascus road, or because within an aureole they saw the blessed head of Hitler when the scales of Marxian doctrine had fallen from their eyes. Nothing would be further from the truth, therefore, than to believe that in Germany Communism is crushed. Every day of the Hitler rule increases its forces and, although this cannot last for very long,

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it is worth noticing how the matter is represented abroad. Hitler, who has always called himself the leader of a "Socialistic" movement when addressing the German people, would at the same time seek to persuade the capitalists of the whole world that he is in reality their steward and their protector. "I have crushed Communism", he says, and by this he would have them understand: "You can set your minds perfectly at ease. The Third Reich will give no cause for mischievous Socialistic disturbances."

These words are spoken only to conceal the fact that he is the exponent of the most aggressive Central European economical Imperialism, merely waiting for his hour to enforce his law on the economic regulations of the other States. Things have gone so far already that in spite of all contradictions an understanding of this begins to dawn on the masses, who after all, and because of their intuitions, can be deceived only for a short time. When marauding S.A. men parade the streets of Berlin arm in arm, when indignation increases in the factories because of social oppression, when it could happen during the Nürnberg party congress that Communists drove through the streets, distributing pamphlets, and when the secret anti-Nazi Press is ever augmenting its numbers, surely here are undoubted signs of how unstable is the basis on which the whole building is raised?

The facts are as we have said. The Weimar constitution was attacked by the Nazis with the argument that it was far remote from social justice, and in the beginning of the Hitler rule it looked as if at least

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some of his promises would be fulfilled; but that hope disappeared long ago. Of the rights of the working class, which in every modern State are taken as a matter of course, not one is left. The withdrawal of Dr. Hugenberg from the Cabinet meant no more than that, though they intended to follow his policy, they did not wish to be compromised by his actual presence. The rulers of Germany nowadays are exclusively to be found among the industrial magnates, and especially those of the chemical and armament interests.

And here we come to one of the turning points in the tragedy of the German people. National Socialism is the last line of defence, to which German capitalism in its most selfish form is retreating. It is a line from which there can be no coming back, yet panic-stricken by their bad conscience these men have occupied it long before there was any real necessity. Significant of all this is their diversion of the minds of the working classes from what are the real problems; and for this reason it is that the whole mighty edifice of today has been invented, with its numberless new and bewildering ideas, which in themselves contain nothing permanent or creative.

To make up for the loss of personal freedom, psychological compensations must be found, and to narcotize the masses is the only remedy of any avail. Hence the endless festivals and shows and celebrations: exaggerated in Germany by the fact that the régime has from the beginning been in the greatest financial difficulty, and could only hold itself in exis-

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tence by means of forgery in the literal sense of the word. Nor must we forget, how much more National Socialism had promised than it could ever possibly fulfil. Within twenty-four hours all misery was to have come to an end; for in a drawer of Hitler's desk there was an infallible plan. The current joke about it all is that this desk must surely have stood somewhere in the building of the Reichstag and so has been burned with it.

With similar purpose of turning the thoughts of the populace to other things was Hitler's address to the Siemens workers, which we have already quoted—exactly as National Socialism only served to divert the eyes of the people from their real exploiters. Uninterruptedly it seems possible for the Nazi leaders to prate about Socialism without there being any necessity which compels them to put their words into action, and very plainly can this be seen with regard to the promised agrarian reforms, by means of which the farmers were won for the Hakenkreuz, while yet the financial support of the big landowners was at the same time retained. We need do no more than quote the Nazi programme itself, Point 17: "We demand a land reform in proportion to the national wants, the passing of a bill for the gratuitous expropriation of the land for ends of general usefulness, abolition of the tithes, and prevention of all speculation with lands."

This was a good and right idea, in complete conformity with Art. 155 of the Weimar constitution, and one would have expected the Nazis to publish exact

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commentaries, emphasizing the point that they most certainly did not intend to stop at mere theory, as the Weimar State had done; but instead of that came the following proclamation: "Sections of certain agrarian groups are spreading the calumny that the attitude of National Socialism towards property is hostile. They hope by these means to restrain the new movement among the people, and to divert attention from their own transgressions. Against these endeavours Adolf Hitler has issued the following declaration: 'Against the mendacious commentaries on Point 17 of the programme of the National Socialist German Workers Party made by our opponents it seems necessary to assert that as the National Socialist party is based on private property, it is evident that the term "gratuitous expropriation" refers only to the creation of legal possibilities to expropriate, if necessary, land acquired in an unlawful way, or not employed with a view to the common welfare.' This measure is therefore in the first instance directed against the Jewish real-estate speculators."

Munich, 13 April 1928,

(Signed:) Adolf Hitler.

Thus the Nazi party stands on the one side upon the basis of private property—exactly as was the case of the Weimar constitution—while on the other it pretends to be Socialistic. Whither does this lead? No man can serve two masters—least of all in such a matter as this. But the support from both masters was wanted—from one the material, and from the other that of large numbers—hence this more or less com-

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plicated manoeuvre. Against opposition following their coming into power, they hoped to protect themselves with their own local forces, so both giving occupation and encouragement to their own disappointed adherents and at the same time crushing all manner of discontent on the spot. Now, it is an old saying that every fool can rule with the *état de siège*; and, with the help of decrees that are utterly uncontrolled and practically unassailable, even social distractions and problems may be concealed for a time.

The present situation of Germany differs fundamentally in nothing from that of the Weimar State—only the methods have become more sharp and brutal. The contrasts between the masses and the classes are more marked than ever, while destitution of the unemployed was made even greater by the withdrawal of support from hundreds of thousands; the universities as much as ever are the preserve of a limited number of privileged persons; while by means of falsified accounts, by working upon the feelings of the people, and by the censoring of all news, the illusion is created that the former situation has been overcome, that all the working men are Nazis, because they really believe that Herr Krupp and Herr Thyssen are their most faithful companions, rather than their own comrades who have chosen secretly to adhere to other parties.

Isolated phenomena must not be allowed to deceive us in all this. National Socialism, as the last bulwark of the Prussian Junkers and capitalistic monopolies, might be compelled to sacrifice a few, even a

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great many capitalists, if the class as such is to be saved. It is as on a ship in distress, where part of the cargo has to go overboard; and all that has been happening is no proof of a more friendly attitude towards Labour, but only denotes that the system is in an ever-increasing perplexity, and can no longer hope to solve its problems but only somehow to drag itself into freedom and safety.

The consequence of all this is, that one need not examine the social features of the Nazi programme one by one, for of course all of them have remained unfulfilled. The "Abolition of Incomes earned without Work or Effort", the "Breaking of the Servitude of Capital Interest" (*i.e.* the abolition of the payment of interest as such), the "Taking over of all Trusts by the State", the "Share in the Profits of the great Factories", the "Reform of the Land in proportion to the National Needs", the "Bill for gratuitous Expropriation for purposes of General Utility", "Abolition of Tithes and prevention of all Land Speculation", etc., are still on a programme which the leaders promised "to defend, if necessary, at the risk of their own lives"; but yet one sees nothing of all this in actual practice. Sometimes one safety valve or another is opened, to divert the fury of the deceived masses, but this makes no change in the situation as a whole. That could happen only after the images conjured up by the Nazis had attained a life of their own, when at once the demands of the party—revolutionary at one time in their origin though only pseudo-revolutionary now—would be taken seriously and

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carried through even against the will of the leaders.

Against those threats from its own children German capitalism has managed to protect itself to a great extent, for on its side are not only the armed formations of the Third Reich, but also whatever of bourgeois sentimentality and bourgeois hatred against the Weimar Republic could be artificially kindled into flame. On its side are all who plead for the Third Reich, "as it is at least better, and its social system less unbearable than Communism, which certainly would come after Hitler". From all of which one is compelled to draw the conclusion that, after all, capitalism was very unwise to stake everything on one card, without knowing or having a foreboding that besides National Socialism and Communism there is a third possibility—the only one conceivable, conformable to history and development.

All the same, may this inmost dread of German capitalism be a lesson to all other European countries. The spreading Hitler-philism, which it would be childish to overlook, might find its limits there; for even if the whole of Europe passes through a difficult economical crisis, and is therefore tempted towards the wholesale adoption of dictatorial measures, she should at last realize the danger of the game which she has been so foolishly playing. This advice is given by one who, without being a Marxist, is not pledged to any support of the capitalistic system. Democracy, imperfect as it is at present, will appear to the working classes as worthy of protection for so long as on



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its heels there hovers the threat of an exploiting capitalistic dictatorship—for so long and no longer will they make sacrifices for the preservation of a system that, when all is said and done, is really not their own. Should this, however, break down too, there will no longer be any barriers to keep them back from going over to Communism; and only in Germany, where there are so many uncontrolled, chaotic currents, economically not to be defined, is there still room for any other sort of action. The social problem of Germany, which the Weimar constitution had approached with real understanding, though in a somewhat timid and hesitating way, was not solved by National Socialism, but on the contrary entangled all the more. We wish to emphasize this fact here, since in the second part of the book other considerations will be discussed which are dependent upon it.

As of positive value nothing had yet been accomplished, and as everything, which the Weimar constitution had at least begun—such as the dividing up of the large estates and the settling of workers thereon—has come to a standstill, and as, furthermore, by the curtailing of all liberty, the position of the working class has still further deteriorated, nobody quite knows what the end will be. The Weimar Republic tried to satisfy the people with words and matter-of-fact teachings; National Socialism is trying to do it by non-matter-of-fact doctrines, bold assertions, and above all by the power of the bayonet. One need not be a prophet to see how inefficient both these methods really are.

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I have said that the German people brought back with them from the War the hope of a new social system. The national conscience had awakened to the fact that to all members of the community equal rights must be given, and so potent was the recognition of this fact that it began to break through the barriers of all parties; and then for the first time in German history something was born that was closely akin to a sentiment shared by all. There was nobody left who thought that the men of the fighting army, after the Peace Treaty, would be content with their old positions; and it is to be noted that even before the Peace Treaty endeavours towards a just system had begun to be plainly visible. A consciousness that changes were necessary had taken hold of the Emperor Wilhelm II also, who understood perfectly well that his exhortations for the unity of all classes, proclaimed on the first of August, 1914, from the terrace of the Castle in Berlin, must not remain an empty phrase. From that moment on it mattered nothing whether one was a working man, a millowner or a scientist—what did matter was that all of these and of every other class in the community felt themselves to be Germans.

The former state of affairs, which comprised a very small upper-class and a tremendously large lower-class Germany, seemed to have come to an end for ever. Every soldier, and everybody in the country behind the soldiers, every mother anxious for the bread she could not give to her children, every boy and every girl of the people knew about this—knew, too,

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that more greatness of heart and soul was required for the resolute protection of one single line of forest, or for the recapturing of a lost trench, than for the highly paid business of manufacturing big guns.

The building up of Germany on new lines had become a stern necessity, even without the destructive violence of the revolution, and many matters recognized in the Weimar constitution had already found previous expression elsewhere; as for example in 1918, in the October decrees of imperial Germany. The Weimar Republic was not the originator, so much as was the Hohenzollern State, of the "odious parliamentary system and the ultimate responsibility of ministers". Even during the War an imperial proclamation had promised to the Prussian people a general right of direct voting, by secret ballot, and so of participation in the ruling of the State. It seems therefore all the more incomprehensible, when one reads of the fate of the bill that, immediately before the overthrow of November 1918, would have led to the realization of this. The decree, issued by the will of the Crown, as well as by that of the delegates of the people, was opposed by the Prussian *Herrenhaus* (House of Lords), that is, by the representatives of the big landowners, big capital and of the Junker caste, who by their veto prevented the granting to the people of what seemed a very small portion of the obligations incurred towards them, after the tremendous sacrifices of the War. This same Prussian *Herrenhaus* itself was swept out of existence a few days afterwards; but the spirit that animated it continued uninterruptedly in being

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and is, at the present moment, more potent than ever.

These very men are the real supporters of the Nazis, and they were the men likewise who caused the dawning liberty of the German people to be shattered by the steel rods of the S.A., and who brought about the fall of Brüning and of General von Schleicher. It is necessary to revert frequently to this, since it both casts a light on the economical position of Germany at the present moment, and also enables us to assess at their proper value all assertions about social justice being realized at last, and to recognize these loud assertions for what they really are—lies, astounding only through their impudence.

Social misery cannot be cured by keeping it out of sight; and if for the moment it is necessary to hide it, then this should be done at least in such a complete fashion that the truth is not immediately disclosed.

It is easy enough to judge the real nature of National Socialism by remembering its parentage. All it can show in the way of social ideas is, as again popular wit has phrased it, the offspring of the "Jewish grandmother", Marxism, but it is just this same old lady that it is most concerned to disown.

Potemkin, at the time of the Empress Catherine II of Russia, was a genius as a builder of towns, when compared to the "Unifier of all Germans", the "Vanquisher of Germany's distress", the leader of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler. For not even the front of his building consists of solid materials—it is patched together from "scraps of paper", scribbled over with

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worthless acknowledgements of debts, or tedious economical reports. Only in one very minor department within the framework of the social problem can National Socialism present itself to public opinion with some claim to success, and that is the so-called "Voluntary Labour Service"; though, as we have mentioned already, the merit of having called this particular organization into life and filled it with a spirit of comradeship is due almost entirely to the Reichsbanner.

As compared with the gay and youthful freshness prevailing in the Reichsbanner camps, those under Nazi leadership have showed from the beginning a tendency that now has become the ruling principle. They are something between the drilling of recruits and hard labour, without freedom, without any fair sharing-out of the work that has to be done, and existing only to accomplish a threefold end: to relieve the contractors, to create the illusion of decreasing unemployment, and to prepare for the coming war. The youth of Germany, herded together by hundreds and thousands in working camps that are wrongly called voluntary, has indeed in the spirit already been sacrificed, not for the sake of some great and worthy cause, but simply to achieve the purposes of the Prussian *Herrenhaus* and its "brown" executive.

As everybody knows, no-one is nowadays allowed to be a student at a German university, far less to sit for his examinations, unless he has first had his spirit broken in the working camp, for uniformity in the

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mentality of the obedient subject seems to the Nazis the best warrant against social revolutions. Thus they have succeeded in the prostitution of an ideal that had a great beginning, and that might perchance have proved to be one of the roads leading to a complete transformation of the old social system. What remains in the end? An increase of activity for the textile industry, as long as uniforms are needed, and another for the turning out of motor cars, till the last S.A. leader has got his own. All the rest is sheer Couéism, as dictated by the powers that be. The people have but to repeat sufficiently often: "Every day and in every way our food and everything else about us grows better and better"—and then in a little while there will be no cruel contrasts in our national life, and no starvation anywhere in Germany!

It was indeed a bitter thing that the greatest suffering, including even physical starvation and misery on all sides, had to become part yet again of the tragedy of the German nation, which persisted in the belief that in social problems more than anywhere else compromises are inadmissible. With her efforts to please everybody, the Weimar Republic succeeded only in being unjust to nearly all; yet it would be unfair for other countries to make sport of this, or think that the German people must be on a particularly low level since they have fallen victims to the clumsy tricks of National Socialism. For all and each must bear the burden of guilt in respect of the tragedy that should have touched the heart of Europe to grief and distress. A people, that no longer

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knows where to find its daily bread, is capable of committing any insane deed. It becomes the easy prey of all who know how to snatch advantage for themselves from the desperate misfortunes of others, and how to misuse the good faith of others for their own purposes. This is a warning for the time that will come after the fall of National Socialism.

The Weimar constitution, that had begun life with so many fair promises, and that was designed by its authors to scatter a horn of plenty over the heads of the German people, is practically non-existent today. Until the last moment its representatives refused to see that the signals of the time pointed to storm. In February 1933 the Free Trade Unions still affirmed that nothing could take them by surprise, and that they were armed against all emergencies. In order that I may not seem to be content with mere assertion, I shall in one of the following chapters describe the day which in my preface I have called the turning point of an epoch; for in what was done then is reflected all that was omitted and left unfulfilled, all that should have been a sacred duty and was not understood as such, and all that irrevocably led onwards to the breakdown of German democracy. Only then will it be possible to prepare the coming reconstruction for Germany, and to lead her tragedy to a hopeful "finale", when the best of what found its expression in Weimar is for ever freed from the assaults of its former opponents, and when of the present social pseudo-solution of National Socialism not one stone is left upon another.

## *Chapter VI*

### Republic, Youth and National Socialism

**T**he German Republic has never properly understood the importance of the problem of Youth. Only as a question of theoretical interest did she sometimes bring herself to admit that no community can exist for very long without taking into consideration these most important impulses out of which it must continually renew itself; and it seemed hopeless to warn her that for her own sake she must take the matter also into practical account: anaemic resolutions and sentimental reflections were apparently all that she was able to accomplish.

And yet it really might have been so easy to devote some consideration to the Youth of Germany, and thus to have united them permanently to the new State, and given them an immunity against all the temptations of her opponents. For the German Youth of that day, more than any other, had been preparing itself during the life of almost a whole generation—not to mention earlier efforts—and they were now ready to give themselves up into the hands of whoever was content to take them seriously. In them everything was alive that had been brought forward by the so-called “Youth movement”, now-a-



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days often misjudged, in the way of liberal tendencies and a sense of responsibility towards the community as a whole. Even that these things in our days sometimes seemed chaotic, should have been no hindrance. Chaos among the German Youth would have assumed form of itself, the moment it could recognize and accept a real leader; for we must not forget that war as it touched their lives had left its traces, and that it had altered the standards and changed the values which they retained from their earliest days.

It was the Youth movement, by many judged a meaningless extravagance, that brought momentous forces to the people in arms. In all regiments and on all fronts there were a few who, as boys, had sat at the campfires in the light and warmth of which a new spirit of comradeship had been born. And that it was no silly romanticism only, the battles of the Great War have shown; but the others also, who had remained at home, with the dawning of the new State had acquired a right that their voices likewise should be heard, since they also had gone through the same ordeal, an ordeal that took no pity on their weaker resistance.

More clearly than the grown-ups perhaps, the young people knew that with the breakdown of 1918 had come the dismal hour, which ancient legends had foretold for the Reich. Whilst the masses of the grown-ups split asunder, and quarrelled with each other in endless divisions, Youth still had a sense of the unity which had come to them during the War, the precious heritage of what their brethren

Republic, Youth and National Socialism had passed through before them. At that time, and when at Weimar the National Assembly met, the proper hour for action was close at hand. A democratic community should have been formed, in which Youth might have found its appropriate place, not merely as the younger and less significant part of the citizens of the Commonwealth, but as a self-acting and self-governing member of the body of the nation as a whole. But, formalist that she is, and ever dependent on things that were dead and buried long ago, the German Republic has not found the way of salvation. From the first day of her existence she left Youth in the hands of those who denied the revolutionizing power of the Great War and who therefore made bold to misrepresent bondage and reaction to them as freedom and nationalism. As for most of them, the Youth of Germany have not even heard anything about the purport of the Weimar constitution, which had bestowed, especially upon them, a multitude of rights that would have been inconceivable under any former rule. The schools and education as a whole still remained in the hands of men and women who anxiously opposed all innovations; while as regards politics Youth was left to the parties, that cared only for an increase of their members, and which therefore opposed anything that might look like hostile competition. And thus they have never been able to win a hearing or establish connections which might help to advance their special programme, and everything has remained fragmentary, carefully sealed up and limited, very different from

Republic, Youth and National Socialism that wide and generous outlook without which the likeness of a real Germany cannot be conceived.

It is no part of my intention to furnish in this chapter any complete history of post-war Youth. I seek only to indicate such things as are essential to a proper survey of the situation.

In the post-war Youth of Germany we must discern the following tendencies:

First, as regards the election of official representatives, the new State, when it had extended the privilege of voting to men of twenty years of age, thereupon seemed to think that its whole duty had been done. It neglected, however, everything that Youth, out of their association with the war generation, held sacred and heroic; it gave them no chance to transform these feelings into deeds of peaceful reconstruction. With a complete misunderstanding of youthful wants, it surrounded its organization with a matter-of-fact chilliness, that first repelled and then thrust them, as with the strength of a descending avalanche, further and further towards the political Right, above all towards National Socialism. From the beginning, National Socialism, as heir to the popular movement and to the misguided nationalism of terroristic groups who utilized the services of mere lads for the commission of their political murders, was invading a domain where it met with hardly any opposition.

It understood in a remarkable way how to enlist the overwrought romanticism of German Youth for its own ends, nor had it any need to fear the inadequate methods of such young men as still remained faithful

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to the Republic. These latter lacked unity, and what little store of ideals they possessed in the way of enthusiasm was derived from older politicians and not from the promptings of their own hearts. It became evident, moreover, that even the so-called Republican youth were conscious only to a small degree of any bonds of union with the State of Weimar, the most powerful groups among them, the S.A.J. ("Socialist Workers' Youth"), and its preparatory stage, the "Reichs Workers' Community of Children's Friends", having been educated more for Socialism than for Democracy.

To achieve this, the same methods were used that were popular with the Social Democrat party, and in the "Associations of Irreligion", for example, an attitude was adopted that was hostile to all religion and to all claims that had historical or traditional foundation. Every meeting and all their undertakings were in keeping with this attitude, which found expression in scurrilous songs and what were known as "lectures of enlightenment".

Connected also with all this was the denial of leadership and in its place a feeble idea of "collective action" which could never achieve any real effectiveness. More even than in its organizations for adults, in its Youth organizations Socialism showed its true character by its non-acceptance of outstanding personalities, seeming almost to interpret freedom as a flight from all good breeding and from tradition.

For these among other reasons the S.A.J. was outwardly very far from attractive to Youth. Every sort

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of discipline was rejected as military. There were no marching orders, no precise indications as to route, no words of command; and it soon became evident that such things as quick-marching, right-about-turning and halting would have to be put to the vote like everything else. The results were pitiful, and only too often evoked the well-deserved ridicule of the onlookers.

As the S.A.J. had been taught from the first that they were not to pay too much attention to the Weimar Republic, it was no wonder that gradually an almost antagonistic view of it was acquired. In reality it was the S.A.J. that was responsible for the movement that started within the ranks of the Social Democrat party, against the party itself, and that found final expression in the "Socialist Labour Party", which though without any great importance of its own, yet had the result of further weakening the Republican Front. With only half-digested ideas of Democracy or about the Republic, they clung to a Socialism just as little understood, and this in an organization under the direct control of the greatest "Constitutional party"—the Social Democrat. Their ignorance of Socialism has in later years led to an even more pronounced radicalization of the Left, which, out of a sheer envy that had originated in rivalry, kept clear of Communism. In conformity with this attitude was their symbolism: their banner was red—not black-red-gold—and in their songs the S.A.J. called themselves "the Youth Guard of the Proletariat" and not that of the Republic. They had

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no religion whatever, and, as it had become the fashion to stand aloof from all churches, the S.A.J. it was, even more than the Social Democrat party, which founded the "religion of progress". At all their meetings and throughout their ideology, progress as such was worshipped. To ask what "progress" really was, or whither it was leading, would have been accounted heresy. To take an interest in history was permissible only to the extent of marking the movements of the working classes, or investigating former periods of "darkness, bondage and retrogression". Polemics against church, against the nobility, and against all traditional teaching, were the only really popular theses.

Very far, however, from being welded into a powerfully united body by this onesidedness, these boys and girls who had received nothing except cold and doctrinaire theories, which made no impression at all on the best of them, and which tainted the majority with a disagreeable trait of hollow arrogance and the sense of superiority, derived from something rather less than half an education, thought of themselves as having climbed to the highest summits of modern views about the universe, though they knew not how profoundly they were still rooted in the nineteenth century, and they were without any influence whatever on those circles of German youth to whom the War had revealed the spirit of God in history. The incapacity of the Republic to produce any leaders of her own, and as a consequence the necessity of entrusting herself to the leadership of her op-

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ponents, had its deepest cause in the S.A.J., in the "Socialist Workers' Youth". Therefore they, and their leaders, must bear a great share of the general guilt in the undermining of the Republic.

We do not say all this from simple love of captious criticism, nor are we dismissing an organization, that has already undergone death, with evil words to its grave. We say it, because of our heartfelt sorrow for the youth of the working classes, and because we think that everything possible should be done to save them from a repetition of such experiences. Only then will amends be made to them for the injuries they, more than others, have suffered from National Socialism, when they are safeguarded against irrevocable estrangement from their comrades in other ranks of society. What unites the youth of the middle classes with those who belong to labour—both of these classifications, by the way, being now almost emptied of their earlier meanings—is stronger in reality than the tie between them and their inefficient leaders. From a common-sense point of view, which is not necessarily a mistaken one, the abolition of class divisions might be brought about by the victory of the classes over their leaders. Once that was accomplished, whatever followed would be comparatively easy.

Meaningless and mischievous as was the whole mentality of the S.A. J., one must condemn particularly their attitude towards all questions of sex. In long and highly elaborated lectures the sex life was made plain to boys and girls, down even to the very

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last details, for in this way they thought to teach them complete personal freedom. Love according to these lecturers became a biological pseudo-scientific procedure, and the wondrous union of two human beings was robbed of its last glimmer of mystery. In place of the freedom they hoped for, however, only the last veils and values were torn away from things for which the young must rightly contend of their own free will, if they are to understand the inner meaning of these mysteries.

Hand in hand with all this went a breaking down of inner discipline, and the nickname of "the marriage club", which was given to the S.A.J. by other Youth associations, shows clearly the contempt that was felt for them, whether by the Right or by the Left. The old regulations of the German Youth movement, that boys and girls should not be in the same groups, here proved again to be right. The lasses estranged the lads from the corporate life of the community, and broke the power of those habits of obedience which give discipline its meaning and its strength. It is the being united in friendship and loyalty to one another which binds young men together, and all of them to the whole order, including its leader; and it is this which makes all the difference between a living organism and an abstract organization. This perhaps explains why many boys never felt at home in the S.A.J., and its preparatory order, the "Red Falcon". They wanted to take counsel among themselves, and not always to have the girls to consider; nor were



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they content to look quietly on while the latter  
snatched their friends away from them.

These facts must be remembered, for they were the cause of the rivalry between the Youth organizations of the Reichsbanner and the S.A.J., which lost many members to the former, and towards the end almost led to undisguised mutual hostility. The thorough-going S.A.J. members gave as an explanation that in their opinion the Reichsbanner was "Social-Fascism" and its organization with its various commands a militarism of the Left. A still more bitter rivalry than between the *Jungbanner* (the Youth division of the Reichsbanner) and the S.A.J., was between the latter and my own Vanguard, which, more than any other Youth organization in Germany, was established on manly cooperation and leadership. In the last days of the Republic regular battles occurred, and I must confess that I did but little to persuade the Vanguard to adopt a more friendly attitude towards the S.A.J. Its contempt for the S.A.J., without either leader, ideals or symbolism, was perfectly justified. This dislike was, moreover, a manifestation of the sort of spirit by means of which the Republican Youth might have been regenerated.

In these and similar contrasts is brought to light something of such universal importance that it seems worth mention here. It was not only the conflict between two organizations, of which neither one nor the other exists today, but the contest between two points of view, important also for the future.

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It was grotesque to observe how enormous was the apparatus set in action by the Social Democrat party and by their Youth organization, the S.A.J.—much larger in membership than the Vanguard—to undermine the existence of this Vanguard. They even had no scruples about thrashing it out at great length in the Press, and that at a time when Papen already held the reins, when National Socialism was at the portals of power, and when the strength of the Republic was taxed to the utmost.

All this cannot be explained by fear on the part of the S.A.J., that they might lose a few more thousands to the Vanguard. It was our principles as such that they repudiated, dreading lest by them their own front, already almost untenable, might perchance be driven back. These principles included certain details on which all future German Youth organizations were to be founded; and because I adhered to these principles I had ultimately to resign my membership of the Reichsbanner. But the primary thesis of the Vanguard, that anyone, without regard to age or length of membership, could be elected as a leader, was a transgression against the sacred convictions of the Left, that considered the breeding of a youthful caste of bureaucratic autocrats an aim worthy of pursuit, when what was needed was initiative and deliverance from the dominance of the older men.

Moreover, the constitution of the Vanguard, without being dictatorial, was firmly based on authority.

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The personality of the leader, and the symbols with which he surrounded himself, emphasized the oneness of the organization with ancient principles of action which the Republic had never been able to utilize. That the leader only once had to exercise his supreme right of withdrawing an amendment moved by a member, or of recording his veto against a resolution, was a testimony to the unifying spirit which pervaded the whole organism as though it were some mystic brotherhood.

This happened when a proposition was made to replace the *Deutschland* song by the *Internationale*. Unlike the S.A.J., the Vanguard very positively adhered to the national ideal, and in no spirit of narrowness, but rather with that sense of width and freedom that was represented by its symbol, the Golden Eagle. It was the highest point that was reached in post-war Germany, when a few selected hundreds of the Vanguard, on the twelfth of February, 1933, very early in the Third Reich, marched through "Unter den Linden" to deposit a wreath on the memorial for the fallen in the Great War. This last independent action established the union with the brethren who had died for Germany, and will bear fruit when after Hitler's overthrow the work of reconstruction can be renewed.

We must leave it to others to write some day a history of the Vanguard, that in its significance went far beyond its actual sphere of operations. Our only purpose here is to indicate that its organization, as in a germ cell, contained the promise of future victory

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over all those dividing forces which had brought about the breakdown of the Youth of Germany.

Externally, what was aimed at might have been the foundation of an Order, on the Left, which should have received its force from the elements of a Right, though on a spiritual basis—such an Order, however, as could not yet be found in Germany. There was no thought of any attempt to change the proletarian youth into a bourgeois one, for with that it also would have lost its *raison d'être*, but it should be credited with such possibilities as are implied in the ideals of a civilization conscious of great traditions, and among these were in the first place the treasuring of what the several Orders of Youth in Germany had created.

Of more general importance also is it that the Vanguard was reproached for being Christian, even for having a Roman Catholic tendency, though, according to its regulations, religious matters were never allowed to be discussed. These attacks were not based on the fact that the highest offices were held by religious-minded people, for it was not that which was considered disquieting. Its opponents felt that an Order with the principles of an unlimited and almost sacramental leadership, going back for its justification to the spiritual and historical primal causes of the black-red-gold colours, was religious in itself, even when not professing Christianity or so much as mentioning the name, for in the end the authority of every leader depends on a still higher one, to whom he himself submits. The Orders of

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Youth on the Left refused to admit this, lacking the insight which would have taught them that a godless Youth always will remain without a leader, and that a leaderless Youth will be shattered to pieces. In consequence of this, as a result, we might almost say, of their neglect of this law of the spirit they all collapsed, carrying with them even many of those who held different opinions.

The most powerful Youth organization of the Republic, the Jungbanner of the Reichsbanner, need hardly be mentioned in connection with the whole problem of German Youth, for in spite of its forty or fifty thousand members it was of no spiritual importance. They were good boys, dealing out blows without exactly knowing why, without unity and without leadership. The first leader of this Youth organization of the Reichsbanner, one Pape, was a complete nonentity. In the course of his tours of inspection he was accustomed to pay far more attention to amusement resorts than to the organization entrusted to his care. His successor, the Social Democrat editor Osterroth, was more ambitious, but he lacked every really necessary qualification of a leader. All Youth organizations, therefore, though more or less in sympathy with the Weimar Constitution, were in a pitiful condition.

At the universities and high schools also, the breeding grounds of Right radicalism, there was nothing much to be found that was hopeful. The Socialist undergraduates, the strongest group of the Left, will not be remembered with much approval by anyone

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who ever came in contact with them. Their leaders were Social Democrats, men who believed in dogma only, and who hoped to get on in their profession with the help of the party, most of them elderly and super-intellectualized and, such as they were, not able to ward off the conquest of the universities by the Nazis. Part of their strength was, moreover, absorbed by their fight against the "Republican Students' Association", a foundation of the energetic and sympathetic *Regierungsrat* Kolb, under whose leadership for some time an attempt was made to awaken a spirit of decency and comradeship among the students of the Left. A few meetings and gatherings took place—but that was all. After Kolb's withdrawal from the immediate control of its management the association became a super-party mask for Social Democrat propaganda, and ultimately it broke down altogether because of the hypocrisy of the youthful undergraduates of the Left.

I was present at one of its congresses, where a hundred delegates met, and at which my friend N., who was one of the chief speakers, gave an address on the differences between the generations, and the significance of this, and he pointed out ways to overcome the Republican fossilization. His speech, unimpeachable in itself, met with violent opposition, and for the following reason: Those differences, it was asserted, might be of importance for the bourgeois youth, but not for those of the proletarian front. Of the hundred delegates, no more than two were proletarians—ninety-eight belonged to the same lower middle

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classes who, whenever they had a few marks in their pockets, were accustomed to go to night clubs where, for an hour or two, they would play the aristocrat. "Now, in the Weimar Republic", they exclaimed, "the proletariat is the new nobility and we are the proletariat!" It was the same mental process at work, only that it worked in this instance in a more round-about way.

An attempt to foster a movement towards unity on the Left, with the Republican Scouts as its foundation, was never of any real significance, chiefly by the fault of the leaders, who were never able to escape from their Social Democratic limitations. This was a pity, for in the Order itself there were a number of capable men, some of whom are happily not yet lost to the cause, though the larger number of them have entered the organization of the Nazi Youth leader, Baldur von Schirach.

The best-trained Youth associations, organized in opposition to National Socialism, were undoubtedly the Roman Catholic, and among them the Windthorst Order. Socially speaking they were endowed with the necessary understanding, and above all they were filled with a faith, unknown to the others. The tragedy in this case also was the lack of competent leaders. If they had but had those, they might have become an important stock for the foundation of a new Germany.

We make, of course, no claim of completeness for the account here given of the German Youth of the Republic. We have only tried to indicate the precise

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points where the tragedy of Germany begins to appear, and they are numerous indeed. On the Republican side, also, there has constantly been neglect of the most obvious measures to overcome the divisions among Youth and prepare them to win back comrades who had become disloyal to the State. The Republic lacked courage to adopt and proclaim the unifying ideal which had so often been commended to the responsible rulers, who contented themselves with external activities and with never-ending compromises and excuses. No-one was found who was able to understand the old adage "Boys ask for danger", or who knew that they must be sought out and taken, since otherwise one will never have them. When, in the ensuing years, they began to understand how much the results of the elections were influenced by the youngest electors, they could think of no other measure than that of raising the age for voters—as if this would have made any difference to what was the root cause of the trouble!

No sensible man would ever ask the Republic to give what she has not got; but at least she ought to have defended her own existence—on the principle that the suicide of even one single person in a community has its effect also on all the others, and that it is wrong to allow anyone to bring about his own death. It was for this reason that the Republic was warned, over and over again, that with herself she put an end to the possibilities of everything it was her duty to defend. As one of the most adequate methods of maintaining herself, we ventured to lay before her



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proposals for giving a larger field of action to the strength in Youth that was not yet fossilized and enslaved by the party chiefs—to sustain it, and let it do its proper work. But her representatives were too arrogant, they were too much afraid lest it might lessen their own prestige, if it should be seen that men who had never belonged to their own party had actually dared to accomplish something.

These men also therefore rightly stand accused of having omitted to create a powerful front of Youth, which nothing could have shattered. Their criminal misunderstanding seems to find its supreme expression in a saying of Höltermann's, which I heard him utter as late as February 1933: "Boys of thirteen and fourteen should look forward to being twenty-one, in order that they may then be received into the adult formations of the Reichsbanner." Let Höltermann himself now mark how German boys prefer to remain boys and to live as boys, in the Hitler organization, rather than grow old as quickly as only Social Democratic functionaries manage to do. . . .

The Republican Youth formations had been reduced more and more, as the years passed by. On one side the Communistic Youth, on the other the Nazi and other organizations of the Right were facing them. The Communistic Youth is important in this connection, because it made the front of the Republican Youth even weaker than it was without them. It is strange that these youths, in spite of their great energy and utter devotion, have never attained the political importance one might have expected of

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them. It may have been because the ideal of the International was not powerful enough in the hearts of the Youth of Germany to drown the recollection of what the nation had suffered in the War. More insistent than any questions of Communistic reconstruction, there remained the remembrance of the human lives that had been sacrificed by all orders and classes for their country; and because the Republic perhaps failed to recognize this, or in any case refused to acknowledge it, the heritage that she should have guarded was lost to her. She has permitted her enemies, openly and in the presence of her young men, to accuse her of having betrayed the blood that was shed, and to add that they therefore claimed for their own the heritage that had been despised.

All this was a fatal error, and not for the politics of the moment only. Langemarck soon came to be regarded as an empty, gesticulating pseudo-hero, with such an ecstatic, burning desire for death, as perhaps a hero in his hour of despair may feel—but not youth, gay and full of vitality, whose comrades had surrendered themselves, not for the sake of dying, but that they might bring forth new life. And so the Langemarck cult did not kindle a will to create in the young generation, but only a gloomy wooing of chaos and the temptation to let all duties of the present day disappear in a last oblivion.

We shall not here attempt to decide how far this deterioration of youthful devotion has been the experience of those for whom war and heroism are

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but means to their own infinite enrichment. That such things may happen to men in all walks of life is beyond all doubt, and is plainly visible in the insincere war romanticism of cinema, theatre, and general literature.

It is perhaps at this point that the greatest of all the crimes of the parties of the Right, and their heirs, the National Socialists, plainly reveals itself. Not content to have made Youth dig the grave of its own liberty, they are now at work on the preparation of a physical mass grave for them in yet another war. The plan was quite simple and comprehensive. If they themselves were to retain their former position, an attempt must be made to drive the German youth back into the bondage of the barrack-rooms. To render the idea less unpalatable to them, and to inveigle them into trampling down their own rights and interests, the vision of a future youthful State was held up before them, and to make the deception more complete some few offices were indeed bestowed upon young people. Well did these men know that German Youth would never willingly submit by sheer compulsion to things which older men, for their own protection, would fain have forced upon them, and which, had they endured them, would have meant their own entire and final submission to the old men's régime.

To such a Youth should more properly have fallen the task of bringing about the revolution of its own class—the class with best right to existence—and of building up in the heart of Europe a new order of

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society, based on the spirit of comradeship. This would have implied the liberation of our collective life from all dead and death-bringing conventions, and an end of everything that only continues its vegetative existence by parasitically feeding on the life of others. The ultimate aim to be attained by a Youth like this—the sweeping away of petrified boundaries and the extension of the spiritual atmosphere of Germany to the youths of all European countries—would have been contrary to everything that the sacrosanct Yesterday for its own sake had established as a norm that must in no circumstances be tampered with.

To prevent this, therefore, a union was formed of moneylenders and secret backers of the “national” Youth associations, the men who inspired the jarring and pseudo-heroic bawlings of a war romanticism that was no longer existent, and of all those whose manner of life is made possible only at the cost of the death of others—pensioned admirals and soldiers, from commanders-in-chief to sergeants; teachers in schools and gymnasiums, all those preposterous strategists of the horizontal bar and the blackboard, the profiteers of destruction and death. It was the purpose of these men to ensure that the youth of Germany should be kept ignorant of their own strength, but that they should be used to prepare the democratic basis of the future. To achieve this they initiated an internecine struggle, more tragic than anything that had been seen before, and with the help of the blind and feeble Republic this struggle

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has been continued for some years. Yet they know that it is their last victory, and that the day will inevitably come when they will be revealed and rejected as liars and traitors to the best will and purposes of the German nation.

By word of mouth and by writing and by our actions we have insisted on these things for years past, but without avail. To the Republic it seemed that a thousand other problems were more pressing, so that no effort was ever made to take in hand the most essential of them all. So it was also that the numerous Scouts' associations were lost to her. These had originally been non-political, and for a time it had seemed that they were pushing out their delicate tendrils towards the new State; but these were soon drawn back, when the associations became sensible of the impersonal coldness of the Republic, and very soon afterwards they turned in ever-increasing numbers towards the ranks of the Right. Their most powerful groups, such as the *Deutsche Freischar* (with the exception of some of its leaders), the *Freischar junger Nation*, and most of the Scouts' organizations, became more openly partisans of the antirepublican leaders, and the greater part of Protestant associations of Youth went the same way. On a lesser scale the same course of action (or inaction) was repeated here that we have noted in the case of more considerable organizations. It was the purposely misapplied word "national" that forced Youth to take their decision, for it seemed to them—and nothing was omitted that might tend to

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strengthen this conviction—that the nation was not sufficiently safeguarded by the Republic, and so it was as a matter of course that they betook themselves thither where as they believed Germany had found better champions.

What German boy would not have wished to see his country freed from foreign oppression? Versailles, the lies about War guilt, the loss of the colonies, Dawes, Young and Locarno—all of these were insidiously used by the Right and, as the Republic only answered with a few casual articles and explanatory lectures, we need not wonder that Youth lost for evermore all confidence in her and in her representatives.

Yet again, she has in these ways damaged not alone her own cause, for one result of her passivity was, that on the German youth an entirely wrong sort of nationalism was grafted—a nationalism intoxicated with records of warlike deeds, and with stories of Fridericus Rex and Leo Schlageter, and able only to see Germany as described by Brandenburg historians. A net was woven, gradually surrounding the Youth of all classes and of every age, in which all of them, in the end, were to be enmeshed without hope of escape. Not to be a member of a “national” organization came at last to be accounted as shameful as though at the end of 1914 in a war game a boy should actually have offered to play the part of a “poilu” or a “Tommy”. The repellent behaviour of the Socialist organizations, of which we have spoken, made matters worse; and neither could anything that

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characterized the Republican students at the universities have any attraction for younger minds.

By way of illustrating this, let me recall the contents of an article I wrote in May, 1931, for the *Berliner Tageblatt*, in which I said that especially at the smaller universities one might notice the intimate intercourse that prevailed between the students of the Right and the pupils of the colleges. In the evenings they were walking together for hours, they stood talking together, they visited each other, and very soon the younger men became acclimatized in this way to the mental atmosphere of their elders. Republican students, on the other hand, hardly had any contact at all with the younger generation, preferring to sit together disputing as to whether it was right from the Marxian point of view to defend the Republic by force of arms, and as to where precisely the limits lay between evolution and revolution.

The progress achieved by the Hitler Youth had its real origin in the influence exerted by the students, since to them came flocking all who in the Republic had vainly hoped for leadership, while even from Socialistic circles came many who had been repelled by the mentality of the Left. Add to all this the impressive arsenal of psychological methods—the importance of which the Republic has never understood—shoulderstraps and badges, banners and standards, music and the various degrees of rank. If this romanticism was wrong in itself, as well as mistaken in the means it used, at least it brought with it an attractive air of mystery, and it was not cold and impersonal as

Republic, Youth and National Socialism were the methods of the Left. Perhaps many will think that after all it only mattered what Youth itself might feel about all this, and that possibly a thing that was undesirable in itself might become right and proper through the triumphant faith of its adherents.

To any who may be inclined to reason thus let the reply be made that results were soon stamped on the faces of the boys, when they became members of the Hitler Youth, nearly all of them taking on a brutal expression and a look of cunning that were never theirs before; and the pictures used nowadays, to illustrate and advertise the activities of German Youth, confirm this observation. Neither is this in any way surprising, for in the Hitler Youth they have ceased to be members of a free comradeship, and have become bondservants of their ambitious elders, and it is but natural that they should consider their own interests and try to push their own way.

There is another matter, perhaps more terrible than all the others, which is no question of sentimentality or politics. A generation is now growing up in Germany for whose boys the name of *Schweinehund* (dirty swine) is the usual form of address; nor need this surprise anyone who has noticed their usual behaviour in country walks or while they are on march. After the meeting of the Hitler Youth, so shamefully organized, in October 1932, at Potsdam, where hundreds of boys fell ill, there might yet have been time to interfere. The well-known story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, whom the children followed to their own undoing, might have been applied here with fullest justifica-



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tion. Although it was not an isolated event, this day of Potsdam showed to the full of how little importance, after all, is youth to the Nazi leaders, and that it is their set purpose to exploit it in the service of their personal interests. So did it come about that after their coming into power these people left nothing for young men but to enlist in the Hitler Youth, reminding us of Plato's warning that every tyrant objects to strong feelings of friendship among the various classes of the populace, since this might so easily lead on to opposition and criticism.

The discomfiture of Youth in the Third Reich was brought about in two stages. First, all the Scouts' organizations were united to the *Grossdeutscher Bund*, under Admiral von Trotha, and brought under the command of the "Leader and Chancellor of the Reich", Adolf Hitler. This section of German Youth, the most important of all, was thus given over into the hands of the most raceless, the most unhistorical nobody who has ever been permitted to rule the destinies of the central nation of Europe; and, as though even that were not enough, a few weeks afterwards, all organizations that refused to submit to the leader of the Hitler Youth, Herr Baldur von Schirach, were dissolved, and thus the *Grossdeutscher Bund*, and all other orders incorporated in it, or even resembling it, were swept away, unless they were prepared to yield to a coercion which, according to their holiest feelings, was a sin against the heritage of German Youth. This mortal blow against the German Youth movement seems to us one of

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the most monstrous things of which the Third Reich has yet been guilty, for during the period of its existence a new and very real power had entered the life of the nation, and the heroic ideal, free from all dilution or addition, and consecrated only to mutual loyalty and individual service of the whole, had been the work of these organizations above all others.

Thus the revolution of the Youth of Germany, that began its visible existence in 1898 with the *Wandervogel* movement, has been put out of the way to make room for a regimented party group, and it almost seems as though Walter Flex and Hans Breuer and all the other leaders of pre-war Youth have died in vain, and as if the young German regiments on the soil of Flanders had fallen on behalf of an utter destruction of all their ideals. These things are facts as to which no cunning propaganda and no wicked falsification can ever deceive us. The Third Reich may stick up posters and exhibit films, exulting in "the new consciousness of Youth", but no hidden soul and no inmost thought is any longer there, and where only a little while back the quarried and hewn stones for a splendid edifice were to be found, one sees now only the sorrowful evidences of desolation.

Nor must we overlook the fact that the ruin has in many respects been all the more complete because the Nazis seized power in almost every direction, and then used it for their evil purposes of destruction.

In 1931, by means of various articles and public

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lectures, we conveyed to a large circle our ideas on the Youth of Germany—matter which we intended to incorporate afterwards in a volume dealing with the renewal of the Reich. We have preferred not to wait until this proposed extensive work was ready for publication in its entirety, as it was urgent that some of the most important ideas which it contains should at once be put into action. As an instance of such ideas, we may mention the "Order of the Youth of the Reich", dealt with elsewhere in the present volume. In this, as are the several states in a confederacy, the various orders would be united. At the head of all would be the Leader of the Youth of the Reich, wielding a far-reaching authority impelled by the self-confidence of Youth, but at the same time ever loyal to the supreme ruler of the Reich and dependent on him: This order, for the formation of which we most urgently pleaded with the Republic, should participate as an autonomous factor in the life of the community, and a recognized place and stated duties would be found for it in the administration and legislature of the Reich. The present outward form of the Nazi Youth organizations, and even the name "Youth Leader of the German Reich", as I have already stated, go back directly to these ideas.

Where National Socialism is concerned, every liberty, whether personal, or in connection with a group, has been suppressed for the greater augmentation of the power of the State, whereas it was our desire, and is still the desire of ourselves and of those

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who think with us, to found the sovereignty of the coming Reich on the union of all its units, whether they be regarded as individuals or as associations.

German Youth has not only in this way lost its inner independence, but also in relation to the Youth of other countries it is now completely isolated. Between the controlled organizations of the Third Reich and the free unions of other countries beyond its boundaries there is no intercommunication or connection. Repulsion and pity are the prevailing sentiments felt by non-German Scouts, when they think of the present condition of German boys of their own age.

German Youth has failed in its lofty vocation of creating a Western community of all the young; and it is but empty and arrogant impertinence when the Third Reich dares to speak of the privileged position of its own Youth. As in everything else, so here also its actions are hurtful to the people and damaging to the reputation of the German nation. Nowhere has it been able to understand or to fulfil the real meaning of German nationhood, and, neglectful of her duty, the Republic has neither learned for herself nor fitted herself to instruct her sons regarding great matters that should never have been forgotten.

What, then, remains to be done now? We cannot and we will not wait until the Third Reich dies of its own putrefaction, for that would be wasting valuable time. It is our immediate purpose to prepare our oppressed comrades within the frontiers of Germany for their future task. We need not worry as to whether

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this message of ours ever will reach them, for there are always ways and means, and somehow they will hear of it.

In the summer of 1933 the idea of a European Youth League of Nations was conceived, and to this organization above all others must the German-speaking countries round about Germany give their aid. It must everywhere be proclaimed that freedom is not yet dead, and that it was never true that the German people were born for bondage. When in all the territories round about the Third Reich young men take each other by the hand and pledge themselves to defend their liberty to the utmost, then an echo of that oath will be heard also in Germany. Let all those who today only see ugly brown shirts before them be watchful and ready for the coming liberation, and then it will happen that the old and the worn-out, the professional party agents and the managers of reaction from the Left or from the Right will not again be able to snatch the victory out of their hands. The German Youth must firmly make up their minds that not one shall be allowed to return to office who in the Republic once had power and then willingly let it slip from his hands. Let us remember that even now they are waiting for their chance to come, and that these very men who, between 1918 and 1933, gave such abundant proof of their incompetence would fain try their hands at the lost game once more, without having learnt or forgotten anything. Even their little bureaucratic posts they are longing to occupy again, and all the sufferings they

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inflicted, and all the proofs of incompetency they gave, are to be forgiven and forgotten.

For the avoidance of experiment and compromise here and there and everywhere, the vision of things to be must take shape now, and thus it is that we see it. The liberty of all sections in the community must be restored, and they must be welded together into one all-embracing organization, greater than just a sum of parts, and participating in every function of the Reich and throbbing, through and through, with the whole regenerating power of an awakened nation. Even those, who in the social remodelling of Germany see but the only fulfilment of their aims, will have part in this, since only when fathers and sons are no longer in opposition to each other can social work be made secure. There is no need to repeat here that we do not preach a mere random liberty, or that we know full well that freedom finds its proper meaning only in an atmosphere of austere self-restraint and in an organization where all the units are coordinated; but we protest equally against all the tyrannical compulsions of the Third Reich, and against those who find hope of future salvation in a creed of "*Ni Dieu, ni maître*".

We are not unmindful of the fact that these words may possibly provoke hesitations in many whose attitude towards our struggle and our aim has been friendly until now. But what is youth to them? A part, and merely the least important part, of the people—an immature part that thinks itself wiser than its fathers were, and for the wider experience of

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its elders only feels disdain. Yet what has that experience been and to what has it led? War and misery, terror and oppression we have witnessed, and none of the "experienced" were willing or able to prevent these things! It is high time that the tradition of knowledge be taken out of the hands of its present bearers, who have shown themselves no longer capable of administering it. Their suave smiles and their graceful gestures of superiority do but conceal their inefficiency. They would fain stay on in the positions they have already held too long, and that is why they assume an air of wisdom. They are afraid of what is new, and that is why they try to suppress it.

At the congress of the Republican Students' Association already mentioned, I realized all this fully for the first time. My friend N. was violently attacked by a Social Democrat whose habit it was to pose as being very young and naïve. "What has become", said he, "of all those famous traditions of the German Youth movement? Do you really think that they were ever anything but idle dreams? Is it not childish arrogance on the part of the youth of today to think themselves the chosen ones who really represent the State? Only by an icy matter-of-factness can the needful reforms be carried through."

Yet it was not only reforms that were in question, but to awaken in the people an ardent common will, such as bound together the Carthaginians in their last resistance, or such as after Cannae prompted the Romans to go and thank the defeated consuls who had not despaired of the ultimate salvation of their

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country; or, to come to more recent times, such a common national will as, at the beginning of the Great War, pulsed through all Germany, in spite of the oppressions and the inefficiency of its chosen leaders.

Is there still anyone who hopes that such a renewal can come from party or trade-union secretaries, from bureaucrats or even from S.A. leaders? That is why we place our faith in the vitality of the young men, undeceived by lies and unburdened with routine work, if we are not to be content to close, once and for all, our history as an independent nation. The "wise counsellors most surely informed", when the Holy City is surrounded on all sides by her foes, will certainly not ensure her safety. In panic fear they will each of them desert their office and beg to be relieved of it. It is we ourselves, the young men of the land, who must bear the responsibility and the burden of the future. If anyone should object that the German Youth movement has left no traces, he shows at once by this judgement that he has never really understood it; and that orator, who sneeringly said that he, too, "was at Langemarck", might have received as answer: "The noblest and all who were of any real account were killed there, and those who returned should not sit round committee tables trying to refute the arguments of youth with some such reproof as that they are 'the sort of notions common to all silly little boys'." Even if these scornful sentences were true, such notions would not be more utterly mistaken and mischievous than those other concep-



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tions of life and of the world, in obedience to which the old men pushed us into all the catastrophes of recent years.

In spite of their present suppression, and although their opportunities of usefulness have for the moment been destroyed, yet the Youth of Germany are still the sacred hope of the German people. In their midst the metamorphosis will prepare itself, and it will be they who shall refashion Germany and the whole world. Everywhere they are spread, and we know that when the time comes they will be there to mount guard. We cannot believe that their souls have turned "brown" just because their bodies are compelled to wear the uniform of an unclean creed. Perhaps it may even help, that at present they are witnesses of the sharpest imaginable contrast to what they will pass on to future generations, since on their fate depends that of the coming centuries.

There is a proverb which says that though plagues come they lay their heaviest curse on those who bring them. Even thus will all those who in the Republic and in National Socialism sinned against German Youth have the curse laid on them, and no-one will trouble to ask on what side it was they stood. For the verdict will depend not on badges or on parties, but only on pure-mindedness and on what the men have done.

## *Chapter VII*

### The Battle of the Marne of the Weimar Republic: the 20th of July, 1932

With the fall of the Reichschancellor Brüning, the crisis of the Democratic Republic entered its most acute stage, and the personalities of those who had compelled the President of the Reich to commit treason against his most faithful Chancellor made it easy to foresee what would come. It was evident enough that an open struggle for supremacy was near at hand, and that what was at stake was no longer merely formal problems of the constitution, but the maintenance of political influence as such. With such clumsiness as is shown only by German reactionaries, the von Papen government soon offered open evidence as to the service in which it was working and as to what were its ends.

There could be no doubt that the government of the Reich was resolved to get rid of the foundation of the State of Weimar as soon as opportunity presented itself. With the certainty of this in mind, it was clear that an entirely new situation had been created, differing widely from any earlier governmental crisis. For as up to then any change in the supreme power had remained dependent on parliament, that

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could only be suspended for a little while by skilful tactics, what was at stake now was nothing more or less than the superseding of parliament itself. Before, all tension had remained inside the well-defined limits of the constitution; but now, it was to be used to abolish this. The fight, which the von Papen Government had decided to take up against the foundation of the Democratic Republic, because it hardly found any support in the people, was fought all the more desperately, since it was only sustained by the will of German capitalists, and owners of large estates, whose weakness in point of numbers it would be unnecessary to mention, except to remark that, just because it had no solid ground to stand on, it was compelled to look to the Reichswehr as the only instrument of power at its disposal if it was to carry through its social and political task.

In consequence of the confederative structure of the Reich, the direct use of the executive power of the police was not within its competence, and especially in the Prussian State it was confronting a factor of which it could not dispose at will. For more than a decade, a government had been in power which was supposed to hold firmly in hand the most important arm of the State, the Prussian police. In some way or other, therefore, the Papen government had to get Prussia, and its police, into its power. Soon after the fall of Brüning, and still more plainly at the end of June, the Government of the Reich revealed its intentions, so that there would have been plenty of time to take adequate measures.

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Behind a resolute Prussian Government the entire working class would have stood, and it would have been impossible to break through such a front as this.

At that very time I tried over and over again to persuade the competent Republican authorities to take the steps that were needed, for their passivity during those precious weeks seemed to me a fatal error. I was perfectly convinced, and so was my friend N., that the Republic could only be saved by the calling to arms of the great masses of the working classes. The real difficulty, however, was as to who properly might do this. Severing, commander of the police and of the whole of its inner administration, was far from being the "strong man" any longer; he had begun to sway like a reed in the wind and was living on his former excellent political reputation. Besides, he overestimated the Republican reliability of the police, especially in the ranks of the higher officers. Whoever showed himself there as a resolute Republican had been put back years ago. Moreover, Severing altogether underrated the power of the Nazi fighting troops. Cheered with loud applause from the masses of his Social Democrat audience, he had declared in the *Sportpalast*, in the late autumn of 1931: "The S.A. and S.S. men do not trouble me at all. Should they some day become rebellious, I will not even make use of the police, I shall call out the fire-brigade, and have them driven off with a water-hose!"

Those were the words of the Prussian minister for the police, at the time when the revelation of the

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famous Nazi "Boxheim documents" was stirring the whole world. In these documents the exact intentions of Nazi ruling methods were shown, with all details of murders and imprisonments as we have seen them put into practice with the beginning of the Third Reich. And it was in vain that the Reichsbanner black-red-gold tried to rouse the rulers into necessary activity towards the growing danger of National Socialism.

Braun had grown old, and was now physically weak; and he was very conservative, and therefore unfriendly towards all new decisions, hesitating and without confidence even in the capability of his own government. Less known, but significant for the situation, were the differences of a private nature that for a long time had existed between Braun and Severing. The only men who perhaps had any initiative were the Minister for Finance, Klepper, the Secretary of the Interior, Dr. Abegg, and the Vice-president of the police of Berlin, Dr. Weiss. It was known, however, that even these could only be relied upon if executive power were given to them as well as to the police; and to accomplish this, only the Reichsbanner could have been competent.

The Reichsbanner had gained a good deal of lost ground in matters of a technical and military nature which during recent years had been neglected; but it had been much hampered in its training operations, as the Republican Prussian Government only too frequently prohibited marches or the wearing of uniforms. This government, capable though it was supposed to be, had, with unheard-of narrowness of

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mind, consistently opposed every activity of the Reichsbanner, when it would have been better employed in opposing the machinations of the Nazis, who were dangerous to the State. The supreme leadership of the Reichsbanner, moreover, lacked initiative, so that it could not be made use of as it was.

The supreme leader, Karl Höltermann, had at first shown some commendable readiness to free himself from the directing power of the Social Democrat party; but he very soon became its most faithful servant, and was rewarded with a mandate in the Reichstag, which made him all the more servile. The higher and middle functionaries of the Reichsbanner were horrified by all this, and in Berlin circles of the Reichsbanner one might often hear such comments as, "Höltermann has got board and lodging for himself in the Blind Man's Home", "Blind Man's Home" being a jocular allusion to the Social Democrat headquarters. The only capable man who was then available was Arthur Neidhardt, and as it was highly important to give him all possible freedom and opportunity for independent activity—this being the primary condition of all success—my friend N. and I together at Erckner near Berlin, where I was busy with a summer camp for my Vanguard boys, wrote a memorandum, the wording of which was as follows:

"Hubertus P. L. and N. make recommendations to the committee of the Reichsbanner, the competent authority according to the statutes:

Considering that it would be a fatal error to view the condition of the Reich as a passing political crisis,

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rather than as the hardly concealed revolutionary situation which in fact it is;

And considering that the continuity of the all-too-visible passivity of the Republicans might lead to their complete discomfiture and to the final overthrow of the Democratic State;

And considering that all indications of a reversal to the conditions of 1918 have issued only in words and feeble beginnings, undisciplined and therefore doomed to ineffectiveness;

And considering that the ideals of legality and democracy, as they have hitherto been conceived of by Republicans, are admissible for discussions *within the limits* of the constitution—though there can be no discussion concerning the constitution itself—and that these conceptions under present circumstances can only mean weakness, self-deception and self-annihilation;

Considering furthermore that a real Republican activity could not, as generally is objected against it, stimulate a revolutionary crisis, but would only show that the crisis is there already;

Considering finally, that a re-energizing of the Republicans should be brought about on a new basis, and within few hours and days, and that to complete this task only the Reichsbanner could be used;

### THE PROCLAMATION OF A

PERMANENT REPUBLICAN STATE OF EMERGENCY  
and the immediate acceptance of the following propositions, of an organizing and practical nature,

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should be brought about, in order to give greater speed to all resolutions:

### A

1. The divisions of the Reichsbanner *Gaue* are the territorial units of activity of the organization. To increase their fighting power, all executive authority of the under-sections and local organizations, autonomous until now, are transferred to the *Gau* leaders, i.e. to military leaders duly appointed by them.

The *Gau* division Berlin-Brandenburg, in consequence of the special importance of its territory, is entitled, in cases of emergency, to take measures deviating from those implied in the regulations.

2. All members of the Reichsbanner shall immediately swear a solemn oath of fidelity to the banner of the Republic and to the leaders of their organization.

3. The Jungbanner is no longer at the disposal of the local organizations of the Reichsbanner, but is hereby brought under the exclusive command of the divisional *Gau* leader, viz. the *Gau* leaders of Youth. These latter are under the direct command of the Youth leader of the whole organization. The activities of the Jungbanner are to be extended to such a degree that eventually it may become an organization which conceivably might unite the entire liberal-minded Youth of Germany.

The post of leader of the Youth organization is to be bestowed immediately upon some suitable person.



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### B

1. The proclamation of the permanent Republican state of emergency is to be posted up with the commentary, that "state of emergency" implies and includes a warding off of attacks, not attacks themselves, and that public tranquillity remains the first civic duty: an appeal to enlist in the Reichsbanner as the last barrier against civil war in North Germany: an appeal to contribute to the emergency funds and to acquire the signalling instrument, as mentioned in point 8. The emergency signal notifies to all Republicans that their aid is needed to ward off any attack from political opponents. A firm spirit of comradeship is the only weapon of the Republican citizen, and it is one that makes revolvers, steel rods and leather girths superfluous.

2. Occupation of all important street corners by uniformed double guards. Strict orders, not to retaliate when provoked, and when on guard to stand perpetually at attention, is made possible by regular reliefs and control by uniformed leaders. The guards will only interfere, when attacked, after having given the emergency signal, or in obedience to a higher order. The unemployed Reichsbanner comrades are advised to wear uniforms or at least badges.

3. In all larger towns special regiments must be formed, equipped, each regiment receiving special badges and distinctions, and being stationed in barracks. Regiments are under the command of the military *Gau* leaders and at their permanent disposal.

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In the case of Berlin the number of this special corps is provisionally fixed at 1,000.

4. Establishment of regular flying squads on bicycles, motorcycles or motorcars. Out of the corps, as per number 3, alarm troops are to be formed, which are to be stationed in the different quarters of the town.

5. Formation of motor corps as aide-de-camp service within the villages and the Reich. As for number 4, the divisions for the single sections of the flying squads and for the motor corps are to be made according to the types of the machines. Training for this should begin at once.

6. The organization of the Reichsbanner formations, according to A 1, 2, and the setting of guards and formations as in B 2, 5, has to be given to suitable officers of the old army or of the police.

7. Organization and control of an extensive alarm system, worked on a snowball system.

8. Production and eventual sale of accurately tuned signal whistles, obtainable against the signing of a slip with the honour-bound assurance of being a convinced Republican, and with the obligation to pass on every alarm signal and to wear the whistle visibly on a black-red-gold cord. Sale only to reliable adults; the signed slip stipulating the payment of fines, in case of abuse. The production cost of the whistle would have to be a few pence only, the selling price at least many times the manufacturing price and to be graduated according to income, the estimation of which is to be given by the buyer. The

## The 20th of July

sale to be entrusted to persons, capable of conscientious and independent control, and to be widely advertised in every possible way.

### C

The emergency state is financed by voluntary contributions, and by special indirect taxes, such as the sale of the signal whistles, or the granting of a monopoly for the production and sale of such.

Berlin, the 12th of July, 1932.

This memorandum we handed to Arthur Neidhardt, who at once fully realized the importance of the suggestions it contained, and who saw only one drawback—the difficulty of financing the scheme. In the Prussia of Braun and Severing it was not to be thought of that the State would undertake this, as would have been done as a matter of course by any sensible government. The idea of deriving the necessary funds from the sale of the signal whistles would have met all costs in the long run; but it could not at the moment furnish anything for preliminary expenses. We therefore got into touch with a financier, known to us, who faithfully promised to provide the money that was needed—on one condition, which seemed a perfectly reasonable one, namely, that the Reichsbanner should show its aptitude to carry through such extraordinary measures by at first lining up a few sample formations, and when this had been done satisfactorily it was to receive all necessary financial support.

Such money as had been put at the disposal of the

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Reichsbanner in former years had, out of a misunderstood democratic ideology, often not been used for its military training, though this would have been of the greatest importance for an association that had undertaken the "protection of the Republic". The money had been spent more freely on current expenses of the order than on the badly wanted equipment for the defence of the State. It was therefore quite right and understandable that guarantees should be asked for. Neither was it difficult to find these, for our credit was high, and the Secretary of State, Abegg, as well as the president of the police, Grezinsky, and Vice-president Weisz, had given their consent to the proposals contained in the memorandum, so that it was evident to everybody concerned that the State would warrant the measures, and that private men were prepared to pay for them.

What more did they want? They wanted that the funds should have been paid down at once, in cash, and that they would then have been handed over to those "competent according to the regulations", for the further handling of the matter. Incidentally this would have meant that the only man with brains and strength of character, Arthur Neidhardt, would have been eliminated—not to mention ourselves, who knew the young generation of the Reichsbanner better, and who perhaps better understood how to handle them, than the indolent members of the committee of the association, long estranged from the real Reichsbanner.

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As the financiers first wanted to see deeds, and the Reichsbanner on the other hand wanted first to see the money, nothing was actually done, or so little, that on the twentieth of July, when the *coup d'État* against the Prussian Government was brought about, the Reichsbanner in vain waited for orders, and was terribly disappointed that the supreme leadership of the "Eiserne (Iron) Front" had rejected the assistance of the Reichsbanner as a leading organization of the working classes faithful to the State. The Government of Prussia had not been prepared either, and it is now known that Severing had been told of Papen's plan some days before the twentieth of July, and that above all things the Centre minister Hirtsiefer had first besought him and then demanded most peremptorily that he should proclaim a state of siege for the State of Prussia and blockade the Prussian governmental quarters of Berlin, an action which would have made impossible, in a perfectly lawful way, the *coup de main* of the Reich Government. Severing, however, refused "to shed blood" in any circumstances, and it was this hesitation, this feeble attitude of "let others do the wrong", this repudiation of responsibility, which afterwards caused the death of thousands, not to mention those who will be killed in time to come.

With almost the identical words that had been used by the Emperor Wilhelm II, in his turn Severing disposed to others the power that was in his hands, more admirable only in this, that he refused to save himself. The doom that overhung the feeble

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Republic now showed itself on that twentieth of July to the full.

The Social Democrat leaders, anaemic and without an original idea among them, conservative to the bone, though formally democratic to the verge of madness, and correct to the very point of being criminal, above all other things were jealous, and each of them distrusted the other. The members of the party committee suspected those of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* (the General German Trade Union)—the most powerful organization of the Free Trade Unions—as they were afraid of an independent policy on the part of the latter; while both were afraid of the leaders of the Reichsbanner, who had the vital, gallant young Republicans behind them. This attitude, combined with many individual unwillingnesses to hand over well-remunerated leaders' posts to others, though such unwillingness was skilfully hidden behind protestations about the "burden of responsibility", was presumably an obstacle to any energetic decision. One has to know this in order to understand why the masses were not called to action, after they had been put off for years and told that "if ever the proper moment came, they should fight".

"And violence we oppose with violence." By a merciful destiny the leaders were not given the lie, for it was not by violence that the Prussian Coalition Government was brought to its fall and that the "Bulwark of the Republic" was conquered. A lieutenant with the proverbial three men was more than

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sufficient, and who would call that violence? Or maybe there were six? At any rate the leaders could meet and decree that nothing should be done.

On the critical twentieth of July, at half-past eleven in the morning, after the nomination of Dr. Bracht as substitute commissary for Prussia and the driving out of the Prussian Cabinet and the president of the police by Herr von Papen had become publicly known in Berlin, Arthur Neidhardt called together the three highest leaders of the "Iron Front"—Otto Wels, Leipart, and Höltermann—at the headquarters of the General German Trade Union.

As a leader of the Berlin Reichsbanner he urged that the Iron Front should receive their marching orders at once, though in the first instance only for purposes of demonstration. He found himself confronted, however, by three wavering men, whom the course of events had left without any powers of resistance and who viewed Papen's breach of the constitution merely as a danger to the approaching elections for the Reichstag.

Leipart, the supreme head of the Trade Unions, even saw fit to crack a cheap joke, when he said to Neidhardt: "Well, you go to them and take them into custody", and with one voice this three-starred constellation of leaders declared that whatever happened they must ensure the proper holding of the elections; Wels and Leipart, in good earnest at that time, very firmly believed in a strengthening of the Social Democrat party, and thereupon it was decided between them that nothing should be done.

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To the great satisfaction of the Berlin functionaries of the Trade Unions, who were under the command of one Bredow, a grey-haired bourgeois, eternally more or less bemused by beer, the only thing they actually accomplished was the commissioning of the notorious flying squad of the Iron Front, which throttled all resistance among the masses, putting them off with reminders about "the coming elections that must not be endangered".

In the afternoon of that memorable day, I returned from my summer camp to Berlin, where I attended a session in the office of the *Gau* leaders. I believe it was Stelling, at that time still the chairman of the *Gau*—he was murdered in July 1933 by the Nazis—who read that pamphlet out to us, and who quenched all opposition. Dull, dreary and without hope that session was. "Did we fight only for this? Why on earth have we got the Reichsbanner? Why did so many of our companions die?" Why? Why? There was no answer to these questions, and nothing was accomplished beyond "the appointment of a place of meeting on one of the following days—"if the situation should become threatening." So, it would seem, it was not threatening yet!

Tired and feverish I went off to meet a relative, who was also my closest collaborator, and my friend N. We had arranged to meet at his flat to discuss the situation, but I had not much to say as I was very weary and depressed. Suddenly—I remember the moment very well—all weakness had gone, and the outline of a plan revealed itself to me. I went to the



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telephone and called up the Secretary of State, Abegg, and asked whether we could visit him that day. Colourless and faint his voice came back—Yes, if we were not afraid, for near his house there were many Nazis, celebrating Papen's victory over the Republic; and he added a condition that I should not come in uniform.

Some days before this I had committed the awful offence of appearing before him in the Ministry of the Interior in the dress of the Vanguard and with the badge of a leader of the Reichsbanner.

About eleven o'clock that night, which was the appointed hour, we arrived. Trunks and boxes were everywhere, but he himself was in a more cheerful mood than we had expected. The only thing weighing on his mind seemed to be what the world at large, and particularly what the South German governments, might think of his having any dealings with the Communists? At great length he repeated to us the famous conversation he had had with Torgler, in which he had told him in a jocular, but firm way, that it would be better to avoid further disturbances of public order and tranquillity. When Torgler answered: "What is the use of that, Herr Abegg? When I openly make an appeal to our men they will not listen!" he had replied with a smile, "Then take refuge to the usual form of your party, the secret order, and leave the transmission of it to our police." Councillor Diehls, who had been present at the conversation, had expressed to his chief his great satisfaction at these clever tactics and had then rushed off

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and communicated a very distorted account of the affair to the authorities of the Reich. This Diehls, by the way, as everybody knows, rose to a very high position in the Third Reich.

It happened that the anxiety of Secretary Abegg as to his own good reputation was favourable to our plan. He had hardly stopped speaking when N. asked him whether he would authorize us to go at once to Munich and inform the Bavarian Government that we could assuredly certify him as being above suspicion of any sort of Communism, and whether he would further allow us to explain to the South German rulers what were Herr von Papen's real motives for the breaking of the constitution. Abegg was delighted, but added that he could not finance the journey. I retorted: "In case, Herr Abegg, we succeed in raising the funds, will you allow us to act as Prussian representatives?" After a moment's hesitation Abegg agreed to that too and signed a document formally appointing us as representatives. As Abegg's private telephone was of course officially "tapped", we agreed that my relative should carry on the matter.

It was now two o'clock in the morning, and the three of us—Abegg remaining at home—drove to the seat of the *Gau* leadership of the Reichsbanner, where after some difficulty we were admitted. Luckily Neidhardt was there; he had taken the night watch, for the building was protected by Reichsbannermen. We explained our plan to him, and I did not hide from him my intention somewhat to enlarge my mission as

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a representative in the Southern States—beyond the precise limits that Abegg had intended.

Our proposition was to try whether we could persuade the South German governments to take common action against Papen, and upon this Neidhardt produced all his savings, which he had taken out of his bank to settle some private obligations—it was exactly a thousand marks—and handed them to us. This is something that deserves to be remembered in history, for certainly no other leader would have been willing to make such a sacrifice. Neidhardt gave all he had, with full understanding of the risk he ran of never getting it back. I drew his attention, as was my duty, to the uncertainty of our success, but he hardly let me speak and, after we had come to decisions on a few of the most important points, we went away. As the Papen Government had proclaimed a state of siege for Berlin and the province of Brandenburg, we were in some doubts as to how we should get away from Berlin.

At first we thought the best thing would be to go by train to Magdeburg and there take an aeroplane for Munich. But this proved to involve too much time, and so I proposed to take our chance and try to fly with a plane from the Tempelhofer Feld to Munich. At 5.30 N. called up the office of the Luft-hansa and, as luck would have it, there were just two seats left. The Tempelhofer Feld was strongly surrounded by police, now under the immediate command of the government of the Reich. Three or four hundred *Schupo* were patrolling, with their rifles

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ready for action because, as we heard afterwards, they were afraid of a *coup d'État* by the *Sturmvoegel*, the "Flying association of the working men". In what manner such a *coup* could have been effected was beyond the wildest imagination, for it was the most harmless organization in existence—it used to build model machines with elastic rubber contrivances by way of motive power, and somewhat larger ones for gliding flights—but that was all.

At half-past ten we were in Munich, and from the *Bayerischer Hof* we called up the Ministry of State. Dr. Held was not in, so I asked to be connected with the Minister for the Interior, Stützel, whom I told that we had arrived with a commission from the legal Prussian Government and that we wished to see him at once.

At about eleven o'clock we were received by Stützel, and in a few words I told him the facts. The Papen Government, in violation of the constitution of the Reich, had driven the Prussian ministers out of their offices, in order to get exclusive hold of the executive power; and as a pretext for this they had made use of the deliberately untruthful assertion that the Prussian Government, represented by the Secretary of State, Abegg, had entered on relations inimical to the State with the Communists. I added that we most earnestly desired to put the Bavarian Government in possession of the real facts of the matter. Here Stützel interrupted me to say that neither he nor the other ministers had for one moment believed Papen's assertion, and they all

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knew Abegg and the Prussian ministers far too well to believe them capable of such foolishness. After that I found no difficulty at all in formulating our proposals as follows:

1. The Bavarian Government was asked to brand the proceedings of von Papen for what they really were—an open breach of the constitution.

2. The Bavarian Government was asked to declare that it acknowledges the Braun-Severing Government as the only legitimate one, and therefore as the only body with which negotiations could properly be carried on.

3. The Bavarian Government was asked to call to arms all formations faithful to the constitution, such as the *Bayernwacht* (The Bavarian Guard), the Reichsbanner and the Trade Unions.

4. The Bavarian Government was asked to let the Bavarian division of the Reichswehr take the oath.

Stützel thereupon most decisively declared that he would inform the Cabinet of these proposals, adding his own strongest recommendations that they should be accepted, and he asked us to send to Berlin a note to the effect that a preliminary to any negotiations such as were suggested must be that the Prussian ministers should maintain their claim to be “the Government”. On the following day, he said, he would give us a more definite answer. Following the formal part of this conversation came a lengthy discussion of the situation as a whole. All concerned knew perfectly well that one day a similar *coup d'État* would be effected against Bavaria, if she did not arm

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herself for defence. Stützel told us that the Prussian Government had omitted in a most irresponsible way to inform the South German governments that the situation had been growing more and more critical, though it was only a few weeks since close and permanent interchange of views had been agreed upon. If it were not so sad, Stützel continued, it would be a reason for malicious laughter, that those bragging Prussians had been so pitifully discomfited; and I could not contradict him.

During the night I had a long conversation on the telephone with my relative, and after that with the apparently somewhat terrified Secretary of State, Abegg. For concealment's sake we spoke of "our relatives in Berlin", and of the "family in Munich", and I informed him that I had not been carrying on negotiations in Munich as the private representative of the private Dr. Abegg, but as an official representative of the Prussian Government. When Abegg seemed doubtful about this, I asked for a plain statement as to whether or not I had acted rightly? He was obliged to answer in the affirmative, but suddenly added: "If the negotiations continue favourably, an official representative, a State councillor at least, must proceed with them." "All right", I said, and rang off.

Next morning we were again with Stützel, who now informed us that his colleagues agreed with our propositions to the full, with the exception of point 4, which was considered to be too dangerous. In addition, they proposed the following condition, without which Bavaria could not undertake any sort of

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action: the Prussian Government was to proclaim immediately, and in such a manner as to make it public, for instance either by a telegram, or by an address by Braun, Hirtsiefer or Severing, that it had turned to the South German governments for protection and for a restoration of the constitution of the Reich. "For", said Stützel, "if we begin without a proclamation, the Reichswehr will be put into action against us before we have had opportunity to take action, and so all psychological advantage will be on the other side. The commander of the Reichswehr of Munich is a staunch Bavarian, yet all the same he would in such a case obey the order to fire. But if, first of all, an appeal to the people and to the world at large has been made, then we shall be in the right, formally as well as actually, for we shall not be attacking—only defending ourselves. And now, gentlemen," he went on, "leave at once for Stuttgart and the conference of the South German countries, and try to get from the other governments the same sort of promises that you have received from Bavaria through me."

That same evening we were successful in seeing at Stuttgart the Baden President of the State, Schmitt, at the Hotel Graf Zeppelin, after having sent to his room a letter, which I here quote literally:

HOTEL GRAF ZEPPELIN, ROOM 215,  
STUTTGART, 22 *July*, 1932.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

In connection with the conversation of yesterday and today with Minister Dr. Stützel, we beg to hand

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to your Excellency, for subsequent use in tomorrow's conference of the prime ministers, the original letter from the Secretary of State, Dr. Abegg, which letter has already been read by the above-named minister. The government of the Reich founds its action against the Prussian Government solely on the assumption that the Prussian Government entertains illicit relations with the German Communistic Party. This assumption is based on actions of the Secretary of State, Abegg. If this should be proved wrong, the proceedings of the government of the Reich have no lawful foundation, even in case Art. 48 of the Constitution, as such, should authorize the government of the Reich to suspend Ministers of State officially acting in a legitimate way.

A more detailed explanation will be posted this evening to the address of Your Excellency.

With the expression of our highest regard,

We remain

Your Excellency's sincerely

H. P. L.

N.

In conversation we were able to obtain, in the more essential matters, the things that we had got in Munich, though Schmitt was more formal in his methods than Stützels, and in a mistaken spirit of democracy harped on the complaint of Baden at the Reichs Court of Justice, on which everything else would depend. With the greatest satisfaction we could notice on that and the following day that the Prime Minister of Bavaria in several public pro-



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clamations used sentences and expressions taken word for word from the memorandum we had given to the Bavarian Government.

Full of hope, therefore, on the twenty-third of July we went to Darmstadt, where we had already announced our intended arrival to the Hessian Minister of the Interior, Leuscher, by telephone. We met him in the evening, at his home, where the most fruitful of all the conferences of this journey took place, for Leuscher went further even than Stützel. He promised that he would convoke at once a conference of the South German States, which the Hansa towns were certain to join. At this conference the common course of action to be taken against Papen's treason would be emphasized. He declared, moreover, that he would put Darmstadt at the disposal of the Prussian Government. Darmstadt, as is well known, lies within the demilitarized zone and therefore beyond the activity of the Reichswehr. The Hessian police at that time was Republican and reliable and completely in the hands of the Government. The necessary protection was therefore guaranteed, and the apparatus of the Hessian State would have been sufficient to enable the Prussian Government to do its work.

But once again the same condition was stipulated as a matter of course: Braun had at once to make an appeal to the public for the restoration of the constitution, and he and the other ministers were to come immediately to Darmstadt. At the same hour the conference of the South German countries would be convoked, and there cannot be any doubt that this

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action would have led immediately to von Papen's fall, for at the same moment also the Republican masses in Prussia—perhaps even their leaders—would have found new courage, and Papen would have been swept away. And the result would have been that today Germany would not be in the power of the Nazis.

“Late in the afternoon”, Leuscher said when we were taking our leave, “you will be in Berlin, if you take the early express. In the evening I can have your report, and then everything will go on automatically, just as we discussed it.” It was the hour of destiny for the German people that was drawing near.

We knew that we carried this destiny with us; but there was something else also that we foresaw, and discussed on the way back to Berlin. The men who had to continue the work that we had begun, and carry it to completion—no very difficult task now—quite possibly would not rise to the occasion.

What was it that had led us of all people to hit on the idea which was perhaps to enable us to solve the problem, whilst the appointed “experts” appeared to be hopelessly stuck fast in their inactivity? Perhaps it was that we alone possessed the inner freedom, and that so it may have been the intention of Providence to save the Republic by means of two men, who themselves were no “Republicans”. . . .

But such salvation probably was impossible of itself, and so what happened on our return to Berlin ought not to have surprised us. It was the old, old problem, with which we were preoccupied, and for

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which there was an abundance of historical parallels. Why, during the French Revolution, for example, when it would have brought about a decision, was there never fired a shot? Stefan Zweig depicts in vivid and dramatic fashion the scene, when Lieutenant Napoleon Bonaparte stood before the Tuileries, surrounded by the mob, and asking himself in great astonishment: Why don't they fire? A single battery might restore tranquillity and put an end to the whole revolution! It might have done, but then there would not have been any Napoleonic empire, and history would have been deprived of her most convincing evidence that even in modern times a realization of the Caesarian idea is possible. And there was another reason why nobody fired: because a perishing State *cannot* fire any longer. It is not possible, no matter what force of armed men is at its disposal.

It is therefore useless to ask the question: Why did not Severing bring into action the police and the Reichsbanner? Why did not the leaders, at the right moment, sound the signal of alarm—why was all our activity destined to be in vain? Not for any single reason, but only because this German Republic had already died some months before. The famous day of Potsdam when she herself was carried to her grave, to be replaced as it were by another corpse that was artificially brought to life.

A State, therefore, that has but outward phantasmal existence cannot demand sacrifices from others; but there is a complementary truth also—a State that does not demand sacrifices dies.

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The German Republic had at her disposal many millions of people, if only she had called them to her aid. All that these people had, their well-being and their happiness, their very life itself, was hers, if only she herself had cared to claim them; but as from the very first she was burdened with weaknesses, and was even ashamed of her own existence, so she tried to hide herself from her own citizens, and never found the courage to demand such sacrifices. This Republic had so little will to live, and such a poor opinion of herself, that she could never believe that others would take her part. She was afraid, and so it seemed to her that any sort of increasing activity on the part of her citizens must lead to her discomfiture. She was, moreover, afflicted by such an obsession of "legality" that though every oath that was sworn or forsworn by her opponents she accepted, with a melancholy smile, as valid testimony; yet whenever bold action was required of her for her own salvation she would begin to shudder, and to stammer foolishly that anything of that sort must find its justification in the letter of the constitution and not merely in the spirit.

Since my entrance upon political life in July, 1930, I had been trying in vain to make this evident to the leading statesmen. In numberless publications, and in addresses that altogether may have reached more than two million people, I have uttered this warning, regardless of consequences, and without leaving room for any doubt in the minds of my hearers as to what would happen if the warning remained unregarded.

A State that according to misunderstood demo-

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cratic theses thinks only of numbers, without being ever careful to claim the love of its citizens, must inevitably break down. A State that demands no sacrifices from its faithful adherents, who are ready for sacrifice, is lost; and by the evening of the twentieth of July this State had passed out of existence. Army and police may be absolutely reliable, but when they are expected to be the exclusive support of the State, without the wholehearted support and cooperation of the people, exactly as allowed by Parliament, then they by themselves will be unable to secure its maintenance—not only because they are in a military sense too weak, but also because in themselves, after a little while, there will occur a reactionary change-over to opposite principles, as we have witnessed in Germany.

On that home-going journey to Berlin it was as though we examined our consciences on behalf of the German Republic and came to the conclusion that she was lost; since only a miracle could move the leaders of the Prussian Government to the simple decision of accepting the solution which we carried all ready cut and dried in our pocket. And what use in saving the Republic, on the twenty-fourth of July, if on the twenty-fifth the old methods were to be taken up again? I have spoken at some length of this, lest anyone should imagine that we did not view the situation as it really was. Just because we did this, just because we knew in our hearts that the struggle for German freedom had become hopeless for the time being, we acted as we did; for he would be a

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poor patriot who should let his country go rushing down into ruin while still there remained even the faintest chance that he himself might do something to prevent it. Moreover, miracles cannot be foreseen, and there always was a tiny fraction of a chance that a miracle might have happened here. And therefore every effort still had to be made and even every possible risk taken.

Arthur Neidhardt also had judged the situation as it really was, and yet had not hesitated for a moment to put his savings at our disposal. And so we had undertaken this journey, and at the end of three days success had been ours. That the State, for the sake of which we had done it, would not avail itself of our aid—that was no fault of ours.

Since even the most sorrowful acknowledgement of realities has no power over the human capacity for hope, when we arrived in Berlin we were far more joyful than we had any right to be after our reflections; but we were speedily sobered by what awaited us there. The Secretary of State Abegg was not in Berlin! It was a beautiful day and he had gone off to his country house, intending to return on the morrow. We handed in our report therefore to Neidhardt, and in the evening I was able to return to my summer camp, for no further conversations took place.

Only twenty-four hours later, on the twenty-fifth of July, did things take a more serious turn, when in the office of the Reichsbanner committee in the Europa House, near the Anhalt Station, we—Neidhardt, N., my relative and I—had a meeting with

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the Minister Klepper, who highly approved of our plan, though the *précis* that we had prepared was taken away immediately by Gebhardt, the General Secretary of the Reichsbanner, to be sent on as if it were his own work. At the urgent request of Klepper, and maybe of Abegg also, there was held on the same day a conference of the Prussian Ministers—at which the three Social Democrat members of the Cabinet did not appear. “It was no longer of any use” was their opinion, “and, besides, the elections and the final verdict of the Reichs Court of Justice might be endangered by it.”

While it still seemed as though a positive result might yet be possible, the most surprising change of all suddenly happened, for when on the following day—26 July—I called up Abegg to see whether I could not instil a little more vigour into the matter, he answered in a tone that was markedly chilly that he did not understand us at all, but that for our own sakes he would suppose that we had been the victims of a misunderstanding. I was of course highly astonished, but when I knew the reason I was even still more angry. It appeared that a Centre man had followed us to the South, and that he had received the same answer as we, namely, that the South German governments would only act if the Braun-Severing government did so. This was the precise answer that we ourselves had received, though differently expressed: that South Germany would act, as soon as Braun-Severing acted; but the defeatistically minded and weary men in Berlin, in this second report, had

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only been informed that South Germany would not act on its own account, though it was added that in certain conditions—which nobody emphasized as much as we did—it was willing to take action. The whole thing was so significant that N. and I at once prepared a short condensed report, which we handed to Abegg with the warning that the matter was exceedingly urgent. The contents of this report were as follows:

BERLIN, 26 *July*, 1932.

Learning that the information contained in our letter of 24 July is supposed to be inconsistent with that of more recent date, we hereby beg to declare that the earliest inspiration of our preliminary report—as already communicated by word of mouth—reverts almost literally to the recommendations of the Hessian Minister of State Leuscher. Only the last point—dealing with passive resistance—was founded on reflections of our own, as we already often have emphasized in what we said. Our conversations with the Bavarian Minister for the Interior, Dr. Stützel, were of such a nature, not perhaps to guarantee immediate positive results, but to leave no doubt, taking them as a whole, that the Bavarian Government would back an energetic emphasizing of the Prussian standpoint of the constitution, since in its own interest it could not allow any similar misunderstandings to arise in its own case. To what extent Dr. Stützel identified himself with our formal request for a recognition of the Prussian Government of the State is plainly shown by the fact



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that he promised to forward it at once to the Cabinet; and that he then recommended a speedy continuation of our journey to Stuttgart. That Dr. Stützel actually sent on our declarations is proved by the last speech of the Prime Minister, Dr. Held, which included many points that had arisen in the course of our conversation.

According to the general impression which we derived from our discussions with the Ministers Stützel and Leuscher, while a change of policy on the part of the States of Bavaria and Hessen seems absolutely out of the question, we do not think it impossible that the Baden Government, as represented to us by their president, Dr. Schmitt, may be induced to modify their very formal attitude.

If, however, another representative has been demanding positive declarations from the Bavarian Cabinet, *before* adequate declarations of the Prussian Government have been announced, then we believe in the possibility of a negative answer.

Considering all this, we think that the preliminaries, on which our report of the twenty-fourth of July is based, and which promise success, may be used to full advantage, but only provided that the action of the Prussian State is not made altogether dependent on an assurance of cooperation on the part of the South German States, such as might be expected at least from the Hessian Cabinet.

Sincerely,

H. P. L.  
N.

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This letter had hardly been sent off when something happened that was still more preposterous, and can only be explained by the moribund condition of the Republic, which we had discussed so fully in the course of our journey home.

It should be mentioned, for the proper understanding of what followed, that my relative has the same name as a well-known politician of the Right, who at that time was von Papen's most faithful knight at arms.

It thus came about that Abegg, who was probably immersed head over heels in his own anxieties, suddenly decided that our journey to Southern Germany had been undertaken solely in order to compromise him personally, or to prevent his ever becoming Secretary of State again. He therefore came to Neidhardt and, trembling with rage, informed him that he had understood our infamous game, and that since my relative was that von Papen's adherent, who was so much in the foreground now, he was convinced that the Chancellor of the Reich knew everything; and he added that he was utterly at a loss to understand how it could have been possible that he had failed instantly to see through the whole affair.

When Neidhardt drew his attention to the fact that my relative was a lad of only twenty years of age, while his cousin of the Right was fifty, and suggested that even in the greatest excitement such differences of person ought not to be overlooked, Abegg answered that it was too late now, as he had already given the word to all Ministers that no action was to be taken.

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Eight days later we heard, through a political friend, that Abegg had been informed from Southern Germany that the promise made to us was now revoked, since they had been waiting for a week and were unwilling that we should play fast and loose with them.

This, then, is the end of the history of the *coup d'État* of the twentieth of July, 1932, and with it the end of the German Republic. From then onwards perhaps only under the chancellorship of Schleicher might it have been possible to regain part of what was lost. What had happened from the twenty-first to the twenty-fourth of July in Munich, Stuttgart and Darmstadt, very soon leaked out, though in an incomplete form. Besides Neidhardt, some leaders of the Reichsbanner knew of it, and when one of them, later on, fell out with the organization, he passed on what he knew, hoping thus to bring about a revolt against the leaders. Against Höltermann and Gebhardt, who regarded us as outsiders and looked jealously askance at our activities, it might have been justified, but not against Neidhardt, the only one of them who possessed such qualities as a statesman needs. On occasion of the so-called general *Gau* meeting of the Reichsbanner Berlin-Brandenburg in October, 1932, one of the leaders of the Reichsbanner suddenly began to catechize Fehrl, the representative of the committee of the order, asking him whether it was true that after the twentieth of July South Germany would have been willing to take the necessary measures for the protection of the Weimar constitution;

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but that this proposal had come to nothing owing to the blindness and incompetence of responsible politicians and of the leaders of the Reichsbanner?

I was present at this meeting, and Neidhardt gave me a rather anxious glance, for naturally he did not want the matter openly discussed. Fehrl, who was a Social Democratic member of the Reichstag, becoming nervous, gave the noncommittal answer that it seemed impossible to him, and that he thought it must be quite out of the question. When the other man insisted that he had got his information from a high functionary, Fehrl replied that even high functionaries can sometimes make mistakes. "But it was a very, *very* high functionary", the questioner continued, at which the chairman of the meeting closed the discussion.

The "Twentieth of July" became historical. In all circles of the Reichsbanner it was mentioned as the day of utter failure, and confidence in the leaders from that moment became weaker and weaker. It is to be wondered that the Reichsbanner and all other Republican organizations were not then and there dissolved altogether, for the men who belonged to them knew perfectly well that they would never now be called upon, and that no opportunity would ever be given them to do more than talk about "the protection of the Republic". The authorities might be willing to call them "their warriors", but it was now plain that no one would ever lead them to fight. They had been put off again and again with "when the situation becomes serious"—but what definition of a

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“serious situation” could be conceived which would not apply to the twentieth of July? If the inaction of the leaders was not due to sheer stupendous incompetence, we must surmise that they acted in bad faith; but in any case it was a crime, whether committed in good faith, or in bad, since incompetence in such matters is a culpable offence. There were so many examples from which they might have learned, but I am convinced that they have not understood yet, and that if ever they should come into power, they will do the same things over again, with a still greater and still emptier arrogance perhaps, for they would crown themselves with the martyr’s crown of their followers’ sufferings, of which they themselves and no others bear the guilt.

The publication of this account of the twentieth of July will probably provoke much bitterness; but, even if many are hurt by it, that will be no more than they deserve. Attempts will certainly be made to disavow or to distort it, but we have no fear that such will succeed. We offer a halo to no man simply because he fought against National Socialism according to programme and badly enough at that. A book might be written about the twentieth of July, with no other topic than this and the following days, for this short period summarizes all that was most typical of the German Republic. It was not necessary to have heard anything of what happened before—the twentieth of July is the very focus of the whole business, for it is a concentration of all the incompetence, the inner cowardice and falsehood, the lack

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of energy and good will of the Social Democrats and the supreme leaders of the Reichsbanner. But it shows, too, with terrible simplicity, how wonderful have been the men in the ranks of the Reichsbanner. They would not have hesitated to offer their pitiful lives for the protection of the Weimar constitution, attacked and broken though it was in a hundred ways and never given any chance of fulfilment, because, under all the rubbish piled on top of it, there still glimmered a spark of the highest possession of humanity—the spark of liberty.

The guilt of those who, instead of acting, founded “Iron fronts”, less in order to fight National Socialism than to draw the one really vigorous organization—the Reichsbanner—under their control, and who prostituted the offices a super-party organization had entrusted to them to the interests of an arrogant and incapable section of party leaders, as Höltermann has done, does not become smaller on that account; for these were the men who gratuitously provided National Socialism with arms against the Republic, and if today many of the working class, in despair of justice and liberty, have gone over to the Hakenkreuz, for the sake of starvation wages, the responsibility by the verdict of history will fall on those who broke the vitality of the Democratic State.

All these men, on the twentieth of July, were anxious and terrified about one thing only—that something belonging to them might be snatched away by another. Gebhardt and his more intimate friends feared lest Neidhardt should climb too high;

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Höltermann was in much the same state, and he was, moreover, of opinion that my own and N.'s success might shatter the moral decalogue of the Social Democrat party, that a man, before he is allowed to hold office and to exercise influence, should first climb the steps of bureaucracy, attaining to the requisite lack of ideas and dullness even while he climbed. Braun and Severing alone perhaps felt no anxiety about their offices—they may even have been afraid lest they should ever have to hold them again. Severing, for instance, who declared that those who urged him to violence were trying to make a murderer of him—never would he become a shedder of human blood!

Even so—but he held an office which obliged him, if necessary, to take the sole responsibility of blood-shedding upon himself. He had no right to take his personal feelings into account. What did such feelings matter to the people? The scruples of a Minister should be his own concern. All he had to do was to remain at his post, in which the democratic majority had placed him, maintaining himself there to the very last, and by all available means.

There is perhaps not much use in speaking about Severing, who was a noble character, but who failed to realize that he ought either to have died in 1932 or resigned two years before that. We have mentioned him here as a warning to those who even nowadays would fain identify the democratic principle with a weak compliancy. I have always felt that Democracy is in reality a very stern business; for whoever is pre-

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pared to represent the rights of the people must also be prepared to defend them at all costs. It certainly is not the part of a democrat to let oneself be overthrown by men who desire the destruction of all freedom.

The ninth of November 1918 and the twentieth of July 1932 have already been compared with each other; and it was often said that the Republic had capitulated in much the same shameful way as Hohenzollern Germany. Even here, however, there are differences, and the scale seems to fall in favour of the Republic. The pretensions, in the one case, that were part of the Hohenzollern monarchy were far greater, and therefore its obligations infinitely more strong. When an anointed Kaiser deserts his country in her hour of greatest distress, then his guilt is greater than that of a State that has made no claim to any sacramental meaning in its existence. And yet another thing—the leaders of the Reichsbanner, the Social Democrat party and the Prussian Ministers at least never showed any personal fear, and that makes atonement for a good deal. They were overthrown because inwardly they were weak and small—not because they wanted to save themselves. What may have moved Otto Braun to betake himself to Switzerland before the Reichstag elections of 1933 I do not know; but more than any other he had adopted the principles and the manner of an old Prussian conservative.

The German people today are suffering the consequences of the twentieth of July, and will for many



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years to come continue to suffer; but that the Republic did not then break down utterly, outwardly as well as inwardly, was due only to the fact that her opponents were not agreed as to the division of the spoils.

## *Part II*



## *Chapter VIII*

### In Misery and Darkness Drear

#### The Value and Significance of the Symbols of Sovereignty

Only to men of a shallow epoch will symbols and badges seem mere superficial things, for in reality they are outward expressions of some living thing that stands behind. They represent the essential character of a personal ideal or of an entire community in its most condensed form, and this ideal or this character is entirely contained within them, as is the plant within the seed.

It was of fatal consequence for the Republic that she never understood this, and that she therefore omitted to surround herself and her symbols with the radiance that was properly their due. She believed such things to be no more than any ordinary image or inscription, and therefore treated them as of no particular importance; and thus when she found herself confronted by multitudes of symbols that caused her more trouble than a battalion of hostile troops, she failed to understand their significance, or to discover any way of defending herself against their mystic power.

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She allowed her black-red-gold colours to be opposed more and more by the Hohenzollern black-white-red, which after the breach of faith of their supreme representative at the hour of greatest peril in the year 1918 were for ever covered with infamy. She accepted for truth the creed that in them the real union of Germany found expression; but therein she was forgetful of the most obvious facts—that black-white-red had only at a comparatively late period attained any general importance, and that before the War the banners of the several countries had reigned supreme. I even think there was a great deal of confusion in Bavaria when, on every eighteenth of January, the date of the proclamation of the Hohenzollern empire, it was arranged that black-white-red should be hoisted on high.

The university students, who perhaps of all sections of the people love colours best, remained true to the black-red-gold during the entire Bismarck Reich. They changed the words of the song, "What tied us . . . was black, red and gold", into the Hohenzollern colours, ". . . black, white and red", at a time when Germany in reality had become "black, red and gold"; and it was under the colours of their various countries, too, that German troops marched against the enemy, for even in Prussia the black-white-red was not esteemed worthy of any particular enthusiasm, even by the ruling classes. For so long had black-white been preached to the people, that the third colour was found to be almost superfluous; and even when in other German States the Hohenzollern

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Reich was considered a political necessity, it was not wholeheartedly accepted as a complete fulfilment. The only exceptions were the Hansa towns, the Republican oligarchies of which had received through the pseudo-empire a splendour dear to the mercantile classes.

The surrender of the black-white-red in 1919 was therefore not so detrimental to the unity of the nation as the Right later on pretended. In Austria, for example, which included various nationalities, where the breakdown of the monarchy threatened to bring also the German part to its complete ruin, even there, in November 1918, honour was paid to the black-red-gold flag, for to the German tribes of the alpine country it symbolized a reunion with the motherland, great in spite of all her sufferings; and there, in the most scattered and exposed portion of the German peoples, these colours had always been revered as the emblem of the one indivisible Reich which is greater than all dynastic divisions or territorial sovereignties.

And at that time there was nobody in Germany who would have lifted a finger for black-white-red. In their perplexity or their terror they had hidden all their flags away, or even hung red flags out of their windows, that no harm should come to them; but when the danger had passed, the danger that thanks to the intervention of Social Democracy in reality never had been one to the reactionaries—the old flags began to make their appearance again and to represent the old German and Prussian system. For

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everyone with deeper insight it was obvious, however, that the National Assembly could never again introduce black-white-red, for in these colours was embodied a remembrance of the insane policy of pre-war years and of the hostility towards the labouring classes; and the recollection that through the guilt of their chosen bearers they had retreated covered with defeat to the bridges of the Rhine, where at least it was inevitable that they should disappear, officers themselves having voluntarily in many cases replaced them by the revolutionary emblems.

Yet we know that also among the Democrats and Social Democrats there were a few who at Weimar were in favour of the restitution of black-white-red, and for several years afterwards their voices were heard, profoundly regretting the change of banners, as they called it. That it was in reality no change, after black-white-red had collapsed ingloriously of itself, did not enter into their calculations. We remember also that, as a consequence of the weakness of the Republic described in the first chapter of this book, black-white-red was declared the flag of the marine. The Left and the Centre, to excuse their change of attitude, alleged that at sea black-red-gold was difficult to distinguish in the dusk; but on the evening of the last election campaign of the Republic I was able to make an entirely opposite observation for myself, since one single black-red-gold flag on my house in Berlin was more radiant than a host of others.

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It happened, however, that the Republic received from its predecessors a symbol in which there was more power than she herself imagined. In all the darkness at that time brooding over Germany, it was the splendour of this flag and its promise of a better future that held the sundered members of the body together; and so the eleventh of August, 1919, on which the black-red-gold banners for the first time were flown as the token of sovereignty of the new Germany, should be counted as a landmark of the highest importance in our history. If the Republic had understood the significance of this event, and if she could have realized even to the smallest extent what black-red-gold means, a centre would have been established, round which all who were of good will might have assembled themselves. The unhalloed "fight for the flag", that split the people into two camps, would have been avoided if the German Republic had hindered that horde of demagogues, ignorant of history, but who yet believed themselves the apostles of history, from defiling her coat of arms in that cruelly stupid and vulgar fashion. As Germany, however, did not feel that any injury was done to her by this insult to her flag, she has allowed anyone who likes to exalt the newfangled little-German colours—that significantly the banker Baron Bleichröder was the first to adopt in his family escutcheon—as an expression of true German greatness.

Whenever the Republic did find the courage to explain to her people the significance of black-red-gold, she did it so timidly that it seemed as though



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she was burdened by an evil conscience. In many other respects her inferiority complexes may be easy to understand—but not here, for, heaven knows, of her colours she need never have been ashamed. And yet, as late as in the winter 1931-2, I was in districts—the borderland of Posen and West Prussia—where the schools were still without black-red-gold flags. The Republic, though then twelve years old, had apparently been too busy to think of buying them and, after investigations followed upon a report that I made, the Prussian Ministry for the Interior excused itself on the grounds that it “had to be economical”. They made no mention of the fact that black-white-red banners had been bought for these schools during all that time, though this must have been known to them.

I have motored in many parts of Germany where the black-red-gold flags on my car did not even call forth hostile remarks, for the population hardly knew what they meant. Without the Reichsbanner, probably millions of people would never have heard that black-white-red no longer was valid. For where—since the schools for the most part had remained in the hands of the opponents of the State—would the children have learnt it? Nay, the responsible representatives of the German Republic have even helped to obliterate black-red-gold from the consciousness of the people, as in the various flag proclamations by the President of the Reich, Friedrich Ebert, or that notorious edict by which the last Luther Cabinet ordered the consuls in the seaports to fly the black-

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white-red mercantile flag—with an ever-decreasing triangle of black-red-gold. It must be remembered, too, that the definition as to what constitutes “a seaport” was drawn up on extremely liberal lines, so that consuls, it is reported, who did not consider their town to be a seaport, when it was situated a hundred miles or more from the sea, had to reckon with all sorts of impediments to their official careers.

These differences, which may very well prove incomprehensible to anyone living outside Germany, can only be explained in terms of the Republic as a whole, and we must therefore try to elucidate the matter by means of some examples. The colours that had triumphed at first in the National Assembly had from the beginning and everywhere been objects of attack. Black-red-gold was supposed to be “vulgar”, and wherever you found a man who thought himself a little better than his neighbours you might be sure that his colour was black-white-red. Intelligent propaganda would have been needed to do away with these false notions, but this was not forthcoming, as the Republic was too busy with the resolving of her many complexes. Very much in the same boat was the Social Democratic party, which in the final battle for the Republic destroyed her colours once and for all; for when all the anti-National Socialist groups and parties combined, at the urgent pleading of the Social Democratic party though against the advice of the Reichsbanner, the red flag with three arrows was chosen, instead of the black-red-gold, as a common symbol of the struggle for freedom.

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There was nowhere any understanding of the depth to which the black-red-gold had pushed its root, and that was why these people were unprepared to fight for it to the last—all that they could remember about it was the year 1848, and anything so far back as that was very soon forgotten altogether.

Never was this more evident to me than when, in an "hour of consecration" I had arranged in October 1932 for some hundreds of my boys, and all had met for the solemn bestowal of new banners of the Order, a representative of the Reichsbanner began to speak to the boys about the meaning of black-red-gold. He dwelt on the cowardly desertion of those who were nowhere to be found in 1918, though now they were so noisy in their protestations of love for their emblem—an emblem which at the critical moment they had abandoned. He went on to speak of the very things that we, too, have been emphasizing—that at the time of the breakdown black-red-gold had been the only solid basis of reality, to which the nation might have tried to cling, giving as his opinion that historically the banner had far better justification than that of Hohenzollern Germany, inasmuch as it had been since 1848 the emblem of the united Reich. More than that he did not say, and I was conscious of how vexed he was, nay, how hazardous he thought it from the Republican point of view, when I went much further back, insisting that the choice of black-red-gold in 1848 was not so important in itself as was the fact that this flag first gained significance when it became the point of connection between the uni-

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versal Reich Germany has been once and our own days, continuing more or less with the following words:

“You who stand about this banner, which I now unfurl before you, remember that it shows the same colours that once shone forth from Sicily to England and from Jerusalem to the uttermost boundaries of Western Europe. Remember that they are the most splendid colours that we know: black is the earth, redeemed by the red of sacrifice, and gold is the token of spiritual sovereignty, the eternal diadem of the German Reich.

“Woe to the people who might have been allowed to wear these colours, yet who reject them; for in red and gold are the symbols of the sovereignty of the world, in which since we are champions of peace we put our faith, because a people who hold to this interpretation of its black-red-gold colours can never wage war with other countries, cannot quarrel with them or compete, since thus they would acknowledge them as nations with the same vocation, and that would be unworthy of a community that is the upholder and the representative of the entire Western world.

“Far more splendid than all other German emblems is the black-red-gold, for all others are contained within it: it can replace them all. You have sometimes asked me why I am not a Socialist, and why I would not have Germany living under the red flag? Today I give you my answer; when I tell you that I, too, put my faith in a revolution, in a violent struggle for freedom, when all other methods fail.

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That I, too, accept the red banners, which once symbolized the highest jurisdiction of the Roman German Kaiser—but it must be the red that unites the black and the gold, for in this triad only does it become hallowed, as it appears along with the blackness of the earth that is common to us all, and with the splendour of its goal, standing golden before us. In the red are storm and life, devotion and service. In red conflagration shall the strongholds of reaction disappear, but red also must be the cloak that shall adorn our future ruler. Black and gold also will he wear and his symbol will encircle and guard the entire nation, and this nation will be the vanguard of the new Reich, in justice, in service, and in truth.”

Perhaps it really was a strange address for anyone to deliver to “Republican” boys; but there was not one of them who did not grasp its inner meaning. Even those who at home were being educated in the atmosphere of the Social Democratic party were not offended by it. In that same solemn hour during which I consecrated the new standard and the new storm banner of the Order, they exhibited the golden eagle with the red talons and the red tongue on a black field, bordered with red. On the fourth and fifth of March 1933 they decorated my house in Berlin, and when the S.A. troopers a few days later made their first search there, the eagle banner, which was the first emblem that they noticed and seized upon was, as though in absentmindedness, put back into its place.

In April 1933, when no Reichsbannerman and no

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Social Democrat dared any longer wear a badge, some former Vanguard leaders and Vanguard boys still marched through Berlin with black-red-gold eagles on their uniforms. If the youngest representatives of new Germany could safely do this, how much easier should it have been for the Republic to maintain her colours at a time when she still possessed the entire apparatus of power of the State; and if, on the fifth of March, all parties in opposition to the National Socialists had united with black-red-gold, the Hitler Government would have been powerless against it and the whole world would have understood that the electoral victory of the Right was no more than a gigantic fraud.

If this seems to be a melancholy chapter, it is because the tragedy of the colours includes the tragedy of the whole people.

What is to happen now?

When the Hitler régime breaks down, it will break down so completely that its symbols, including the black-white-red flag, will not be found even amid the dust of the museums. Will the banner of the German Reich then be red? One could almost find it in one's heart to wish that this might come about, as a judgement on those who were so contemptuous concerning the mild rule of the Weimar State and who exploited so shamelessly the good faith and the inner decency of the German working classes.

For ourselves no such ideas are possible, because a flag that is red only can never be the embodiment of Germany's mission in the world. It is a strange and

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uncertain period through which we are passing now. Up to the present moment the Hitler Government has not had the courage to change formally the coat of arms of the German Reich. Now, as before, it shows the black-red-gold colours, even as the standard of the President of the Reich was allowed at first to remain the same. Recently, however, it has put a black-white-red stripe round the black-red-gold eagle, so that it now rather reminds one of the wrappings on a packet of toffee, bought at a fair.

Thus these men are qualifying to be their own executioners, for the more they abandon Germany's true symbols and the more completely they reject her eagle, the better for everyone else it will be. Their Hakenkreuz (Swastika) means nothing, and to their blindness even its origin and what might have been its inner signification remain unknown. As they have put it into use today, its effect is fossilizing and without constructive power.

I have seen flag parades of many kinds and in the most various countries, and all of them were effective, all of them touched the hearts and minds of the spectators—the Hakenkreuz banners alone are empty of meaning or of power. They do but give an impression of some dead thing, however many of them there may be, and however much they flutter about. In the hands of its unworthy bearers the swastika has become the antithesis of what it ought to be, so that today it is a sign of death, the appalling image of the macabre dancing into which the people have been driven. I have seen

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avenues in which on every tree the Hakenkreuz was painted—an awful sight; and all the time I was feeling as though the trees themselves must likewise die, if these skipping devils should but touch them. I imagined the symbol working into the innermost life sap of the growing things, and destroying them as certain rays are able to destroy the germs of life.

The Hakenkreuz has become a mark of infamy, in whose name morals are preached but murder is secretly done. The Hakenkreuz is the seal set upon the nameless horrors of the political prisons of the Third Reich and the mark of Cain on everyone who in any way has shared the guilt of bringing a great nation into bondage. It has even been openly declared that this symbol is ultimately to replace the Cross of Golgotha itself—nor could the sources from which the movement springs, and by which it is constantly nourished, be more plainly revealed than by such an utterance as this. It may even be that this challenge of “Hakenkreuz versus the Cross of Golgotha” will point to the true path for priests “who mind earthly things”; but it has its lessons also for those who by means of a concordat with the Church hope to gain for themselves advantages which nobler-minded men despise.

We remembered Walther von der Vogelweide and with him we whispered: “Lord, to all Christians give thine aid”, when we saw the posters in which Herr von Papen is represented as sitting innocently by the side of high dignitaries of the Church that we honour as the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Com-



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munity. There seems to be no-one now who with the courage of a St. Ambrose of Milan is bold enough to drive the representatives of the Third Reich, stained with the blood of their brethren, from the threshold of the Church, for still these men are allowed to desecrate the Holy Sacrifice by their presence, and still it almost seems as though the Church had abandoned the faithful. We can but offer up our prayers that eternal ideals may no longer be bartered away for earthly treasures, and that the promises of those men, who oppose the Cross of Christianity with their symbol of Satan, may at last be recognized for what they are—null and void when they are given and dangerous if they should ever be fulfilled.

We are not unmindful of the difficult situation in which the Roman Catholic Church in Germany is placed; but it is our belief that her priests should strengthen their resolution to the very point of martyrdom, shedding even their blood in brave defence of the Faith. Better that the Church should creep back into the catacombs from which she came forth to conquer the world, than that the congregations should be in doubt of their priests! Is there really no-one left among them, none who will openly dare to cry aloud an accusation against the falsehood of this so-called "Christian" attitude, which allows these treacherous leaders, with the name of the Lord upon their lips, to give their signatures to shameful treaties, pledging themselves with most tremendous oaths? It may be true enough that they are afraid of international complications, and so are for the mo-

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ment powerless to "assimilate" the Roman Catholic Church; but the end of it all will be that in round-about ways the masters whom they serve will try to extirpate every religion, unwilling that liberty, which is being violated by them everywhere, should find a refuge there, or that One who said that all of us are God's children should continue to reign as the Eternal King over the souls of men. If they could, these people would crucify Him afresh and—worse than anything that was done 1900 years ago—would break His every limb and shape Him to the distortions of their criminal emblem, as they have broken the limbs of many of our brethren, and as they have not hesitated even to debase the origins of life itself and the power of humankind to pass it on.

Therefore we utter the words of our prayer, that this time of tribulation may be shortened, and we reconsecrate the colours, that shall bear God's sign in the coming battle, to a higher and a more holy significance. The black of His Cross, His earth, His sorrow for our sinning, and the red of His chalice, His kingdom and His blood, and His redemption in the gold; for we believe that in union with those powers against which the Hakenkreuz has raised itself we can give to the German people a symbol of such strength that in the redness of the approaching dawn will something once again be found which can join the black with the gold.

The things that happened, when for a while the black-red-gold was compelled to retreat before the Hakenkreuz, happened only in order that all im-

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purities should be removed from it; for never more shall there be any shadow of a doubt that black-red-gold has nothing whatever in common with such men as the profiteers of the Republican system, with the knights of the Stock Exchange, with literary dirt-mongers and party autocrats, or with the Sklareks, Barmats, Kutiskers and their associates and companions.

Now, when the people of Germany are standing under the fourfold gallows of the Hakenkreuz, they must be careful to remember that not even the most ignoble usage can ever desecrate the colours of the black-red-gold, which are too sublime and all-embracing to be defiled by anyone. So shall they come to life again, confessing no longer any interests in common with alcoholic undergraduate romanticism, with 1848, with Jahn "the father of athletics", with sluggish methods and old-German beards.

Shredded by the hurricane that blows about them, the flags shall be carried flaming from the South of the Reich to the North, and then on to the farthest Eastern and Western boundaries, from victory to victory. Whoever is allowed to bear them, to defend against the enemy the very stuff of which they are made, shall be accounted a chosen one, almost a priest, whose hands must be free from all sin. Who follows them and who dies for them shall win eternal redemption more surely than by doing penance for a thousand years. And the lowest of the people, if only he be true to them, shall stand a hundred times higher than the highest who have

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failed to understand their meaning or who have even dared to fight against them.

To quote the song of the Reichsbanner:

“In misery and in darkness drear her colours we  
did hide;

But we shall free her from her bonds and bring  
her back to light.”

That hour has not yet arrived, and in many an anxious moment we have prophesied that “misery and darkness drear” were in store for us and for those who are to follow us. I believe, nevertheless, that the struggle has not been in vain; for if the attack was first of all and most visibly directed against the symbol of the black-red-gold, the people may come to understand therefrom its significance.

The order in which the colours reappear, however, may need to be altered, and the German people, emerging from such trials, will do well to change their black eagle for a golden one, and we have given words to this thought in a song that is being sung to-day far beyond the narrow borders of our fatherland—a song that is the expression of the work that lies before us:

“Golden shines our goal above the blackness of the  
ground,

Red the flame encircling it, by which we all are  
bound.”

Faithful to an order that came in no casual fashion

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from above, but to which we must devote our whole life and destiny—an order from which sprang the Golden Eagle that will restore to the German people that most precious privilege of liberty—never entirely theirs, and now for the time being altogether lost. These things must be remembered by those who to-day are living outside of the German “darkness drear”, who succeeded in escaping from the “brown” dungeons, but who will not be content just to look on in inactivity, or in a pale aestheticism, till men have undertaken and accomplished on their behalf the modern labours of Hercules.

As a grain of wheat contains within itself the secrets of a thousand years in other fields, and brings also the golden benediction of all future harvest, so in this living symbolism works the living greatness of the chosen German people from my ancestor Otto the Great, the founder of the Holy Reich in the tenth century, until the end of time. This Eagle is royal in itself, needing not even the crown to indicate its imperial rank, since its very presence, the mere fact of its existence is a fulfilment and a solemn promise. Let this also be remembered by those who today see only the hammer and sickle, which they hold up against the Hakenkreuz, or who see no use or meaning in the preservation of such things as in their outward form call back the past.

We respect the hammer and the sickle as the greatest and the finest of the symbols chosen by our foes, and so we do not insult them by any comparison with the desecrations of the National Socialists. We oppose

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them only because to us they are expressions of a system that we reject in its entirety. Nor should we be content if the present régime of non-spirituality, of violence, of denial of eternal values and of calumnia-tion of the divine should be replaced by another, containing the same destructive elements.

In our opinion also it is wrong to oppose terror by terror, since that would only be to forge, link by link, a chain that would unendingly hinder our return to a community of brotherhood; and it is because we hold the view, that a complete change from the funda-mental elements of National Socialism is necessary, that we now turn our attention to the approaching danger of Communism.

Our political views were sufficiently matter of fact to prevent us from joining those in the Weimar Re-public who were wholly absorbed in a "bright and lively" persecution of the Communists, but who at the same time overlooked the much nearer danger that threatened humanity as a whole. Nor would we preach a return to any outworn forms of society or of State. Our present championing of the black-red-gold has therefore nothing in common with that which inevitably led to the birth of National Social-ism. Whoever reads this book with attention will understand this at once; and there can be no greater accusation brought against National Socialism than that it has driven untold numbers of the best men in the country into the Communist party to which they do not properly belong, and from which no salvation is to be expected. They will never be won back by

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arguments: the only way of winning them is to reveal to them one's own attitude in social affairs and to appeal to those spiritual powers which in them are more alive than in others.

The Church also must understand that in Germany at the present moment she is going very near to furthering ideas of Communism in every direction. We find her, in this respect, lacking in everything that is required for the fulfilment of her mission as a living power; and we believe that if she continues to hold intimate relations with the National Socialists, abstaining, for the sake of material advantage, from opposing them, she will find that by her own misguided action she has lost the confidence of the faithful. She must surely know, that the time will come when the congregations will flock around those shepherds only who have been true to their creed, and that the bishops and priests who for their faith in righteousness suffered torture and prison, are the chosen representatives of the Christian ideal.

This is an inexorable law, and there are no arguments powerful enough by which it might be talked out of existence. On the necks of those who at present cause even the smallest vexation to the weak and weary, or who let themselves be deluded by power that is not exercised on behalf of justice, on their necks verily millstones should be hung, and they themselves cast into the uttermost depths of the sea. The day is still with us in which our work can be done, and no single one of us must be allowed to fold his hands in his lap and sit idle because all is supposed to be lost.

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We gave to this chapter the title of "In Misery and Darkness Drear", because it deals with the symbolism of the Third Reich and of the Reich that is to come; and in it we have spoken of the conditions into which the German people have been thrust by the ineptitude of its leaders. The fault of these same leaders it was that our banners of the future, unfurled it may be too soon, had to be furled again and hidden, as there were none strong enough to bear them. There was no section of the Germans then that understood our mission, and so we had to look on while the poles from which the flags had fluttered were submerged by the "brown" flood.

It may be that in Austria at this very moment the future is being prepared—yet even there, though in their own way, the methods of the Third Reich are being followed, and the only thing that seems to anyone to be important is that the decrees should be issued from Vienna instead of from Munich or Berlin; and there, too, when "an Austrian" appears we know at once that only by the old Austrian uniform is he distinguished from the Reichswehr.

Neither Prince Eugen nor Fieldmarshal Radetzki would be competent to build a wall strong enough to resist the undermining of National Socialism; and "Austrians" will only find the fulfilment of their vocation if in them the ideals of true humanity and of freedom are brought to life again. For this, there is no need of theoretic literary or abstract conceptions as to the future of Austria—what is happening in Germany today makes it very easy to hold up the



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true exemplar; but they who would accomplish this must have clean hands, and be free from all secret admiration of the Third Reich—a hidden admiration that would change easily and at once into an open one, if the mighty enemy should but give the sign with his little finger.

The only German ground on which black-red-gold can nowadays still show itself must be maintained for the sake of Germany and for mankind. For this, all party quarrels must be silenced, and every man must acknowledge that to fish in troubled waters is a sin towards all. It is with the utmost anxiety that we are looking on, and we hope and pray to be spared this ultimate loss. Austria holds the destiny of seventy million Germans in her hands, and victory may be hers if she struggles after it with all her heart. Maybe for her the old prophecy was meant—that the Saviour shall come from out of the South.

“In misery and darkness drear” the Kyffhäuser is hidden still, nor will he have his secret places violated by those whom he shall some day be sent to judge; but of this we are assured—that he awaits his time and the coming deliverance from the tattered bands which so shamefully sustain the German people on the wheel of torment to which it is tied.

Even now a first glimmer of hope is passing through the minds of all who lie in the dungeons or who dwell in the slums of the large towns—in the dismal buildings which the Third Reich pledged itself to abolish, but which stand there still—the bondage is not everlasting, have patience and be strong!

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As for the leaders of the Third, the Unholy Reich that like clods of heavy soil are weighing down upon the seed that is already sprouting, they shall be seized by growing uncertainty, as is beginning to be evident even now. When they are confronted by the Hakenkreuz flags, by those harsh symbols which they chose for themselves, they will begin to understand what their fate is to be; for I believe that the coming doom, of which we have written in another chapter of this book, will have new methods of punishment that will make even the death sentence superfluous.

More dreadful even than death will be to them the penalty that compels the guilty men to wear always in public their hated uniforms and their disgraced and despised symbols. In front of all the people they will be obliged to exhibit them, wherever they are and wherever they go; and outstretched fingers in hatred and derision will point at them, until the same horror and the same defilement come to them, that in these years they have brought upon debased humanity. The darkness, through which they will have to pass, will be other than that in which we had to hide the black-red-gold. That darkness was but for a time, in which to prepare the resurrection of the flag; but they will be cast out for ever, and for ever known by the very token they sought to exalt into a fetish.

But we know also that this deliverance will not fall of its own accord from Heaven. It has to be wrestled for in combat and in prayer; and already some there are who meditate on these things without intermission, and who will some day carry all the others

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along with them, until the day in which the words of the poet Stefan George shall come to pass—those prophetic words in which he foresaw our future:

“Whenever this people from cowardly weakness  
Remembers itself as the sent and the chosen:  
Then God shall reveal to it innermost meaning  
Of horror appalling. Then hands shall be lifted,  
And voices intoning in praise of its highness;  
Then flutters at dawn in the wind—as a token—  
The true royal standard, and greets in obeisance  
The High Ones, the Heroes.”

It is the Golden Eagle of the standard that exalts and exults in the high royalty of the revived and restored people of Germany, for the accomplishing of the One Undivided Christian Occident. This is the goal, which after “misery and darkness drear” awaits us; and so living is this faith and so marvellous the revelation, that not even amidst the most distant of the stars could room be found for him who is unwilling to dedicate to it his entire life or, if need be, his death.

## Chapter IX

### Freedom and the National Socialist State

**I**n the *Horst Wessel* song, the fighting song of the National Socialists, there is a line in which mention is made of "Freedom and Plenty", and their whole struggle was concerned with these two matters, the German people being promised, in innumerable printed and spoken proclamations by the Hitler movement, liberation both within and without the country.

They were told that the Weimar system implied, both at home and in foreign politics, the oppression of the country, and that, therefore, it was important to overthrow it, if the pressure which made all work and every activity impossible was to be removed.

"Breaking the bondage of interest and of the management by parties" was the slogan with which the National Socialists entered every election campaign; and with their advent to power, flags of liberty were to flutter over Germany, every man and every woman was to receive new chances in the Third Reich, and every limitation by antiquated laws was to be removed. Many millions gave credence to these promises, for—so they were told—the Third Reich would not stop at empty democratic ideas, but

Freedom and the National Socialist State would bring about a gathering of all to share in the responsibility and to cooperate with the State—there was, that is to say, to be real political freedom.

Here too the National Socialists have shown themselves masters of psychology, since Freedom is the one prerequisite, without which nobody nowadays should be allowed to face the people. For no matter how its form may change, it is regarded by all men as a possession for which they must constantly strive, and which, each in his own way, they hunger to attain. It is indeed true that little, which is generally valid, can be said about freedom; but, as it belongs to the ethical fundamental demands of the development of mankind, its absence is always immediately felt and becomes an irremediable defect in the existence of a single person, or of the entire nation.

All our reflections and our aspirations are directed towards freedom, its name is the shortest formula to which everything in the most varying efforts of our thoughts, feelings and desires can be reduced. This has to be taken into account, even by such as would fain extinguish the desire for freedom in others and would wish to replace the thing itself by the rule of their own will.

Hence, even the most uncompromising reactionary no longer dares to side openly with the restrictions of freedom which are common enough today. Compelled by law, which is in force everywhere, even he will have to appear to emphasize that he approves of it; but he is likely to add that it must be accomplished

Freedom and the National Socialist State within the "Order" as he himself conceives it; and it is precisely this demeanour which we may observe in the Third Reich. In contradiction to the spirit of their promises, its leaders, immediately after seizing power, set aside everything which in the Weimar constitution bore any semblance to being the outcome of a spirit of freedom, or which had made the Republic dear even to those who were in no way in agreement with its social order. For it cannot be denied that there was indeed a new spirit arising in Germany, which clearly differed from the forms of the State under William II. This could be observed, in the most obvious manner, even by the way in which the officials and executive organs of the Republic treated the citizens of the State.

By this is not implied that the Weimar Republic represented the ideal picture of a free State; but, according to its intention at least, it was meant to be that, just as it prided itself on its constitution being the most liberal in the world. Our meaning is that, in a period of force and oppression on all sides, such aims are valuable in themselves, if they are present; and they are of prime importance, even though they may be contrary to the settled order of the State. This is a fact which only the most extreme opponents of the Republic, but above all the Communists, tried to deny. They were wrong if they held the freedom of the democratic State to be void, or if they sought to persuade the masses that they had no more to lose under Hitler than they had already lost under the Weimar régime. Not until today was it possible to

Freedom and the National Socialist State estimate correctly how much still remained to be lost, but the masses already recognized these things more clearly than did their leaders, some years ago.

As the Republic drew nearer to its end, the more strongly did they cling to the small measure of freedom which they still possessed. Full of symbolic meaning, its name was even in the last year of the Republic used as a form of salutation and a sign of recognition by the millions who still preferred the incompleteness of the Weimar system to the threatened rule of force by the National Socialists. Thus we do not, at the moment, wish to discuss the point that freedom, in its fullest sense, is only possible when conditions in the social sphere, which are the cause of the misery of millions, are changed. We only wish to repeat here that the Weimar Republic did but little in this respect to initiate useful reforms.

We are also very well aware that the term freedom, in itself, and without a more complete definition, is but an empty phrase, and may often include nothing more than slavish dependence on traditional ideas. Hence the National Socialist agitation, with its promise of "real liberty"—the precise meaning of which it was never even attempted to explain—met with a good reception, since many in Germany had been disgusted by the cries of liberty uttered by other organizations. By these we mean particularly the so-called associations of irreligious people, of which I made mention in the chapter on "Youth", and which were allied to and supported by the Social Democratic party.

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It is not easy fully to describe these associations. All told, they may have counted a million members, and their aim was to carry out what was described as "a modern conception of life". To gain this purpose, they fought against all forms of religion and against every tradition. They believed in the gospel of the wireless and of the electric vacuum cleaner, as strongly as a peasant from Brittany believes in the Gospel of Jesus Christ: that is to say, they saw in the technique of our days the highest consummation of human endeavour, and they became intoxicated with their own superiority, which in their opinion raised them far above all those who were still in the Middle Ages. But that the Middle Ages had ever existed, they only knew from the penny pamphlets of their organizations, subscription to which entitled them at one and the same time to free cremation—but this only after a stipulated number of years' membership!

I once greatly shocked a freethinker who told me he had seen a Gothic church on the stones of which remarkable impressions could be seen, "which foolish and unintelligent people maintained had been made by the devil". I looked blankly at him and then replied: "Well, and are you yourself of the opinion that the devil didn't make them?" I believe that thereby his world picture was for the time being completely shattered, and that it took him several weeks to recover from the shock.

The freethinkers were those who liked to adapt the forms of other cults, bringing them up to date and so into harmony with their own ideas. Thus, at their



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Christmas celebrations, they would sing biblical songs, the words of which they changed, however, to match the spirit of the Social Democratic Sports Clubs. Sometimes they would also use such opportunities to alter prophecies in the Christmas hymns concerning the Messiah into sentiments of class warfare. Thus—the song “*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht*” (“Peaceful night, holy night”), which is known the whole world over, became in their version an invitation to strike, and to sabotage coal production. It is thus understandable, that such bad taste and such a perversion of the idea of liberty only served to offend many people, and make them support everything that promised to put an end to such mischief.

After these explanations, people will hardly reproach me if I preach the “religion of progress” or even, that under the term “liberty” I understand the separation of law and subjection; for it is particularly in regard to subjection that I see freedom, and indeed the combination is inseparable, since one notion could not be imagined without the other. We can thus apply here a judgement, which will be quoted once again in this book: “If a Social Democrat comes to you, and says, ‘I am for freedom’, turn your back on him as you reply, ‘I also am for freedom’! And if a Conservative comes to you and says: ‘I am for order’, turn your back on him as you say: ‘I too am for order’!”

For freedom means acting in obedience to the historical laws of our territory, and serving the expressed human thought that is the will of the whole

Freedom and the National Socialist State people. This means that Germany will be able to create free people only when she exhibits such a spirit as that by which they live; but it must be maintained in the meantime that only conditions which guarantee liberty in its outward sense are qualified to forward this work of education. By this the spiritual and physical inviolability of man is to be understood.

Such a demand also includes a freedom of outlook on life, and the liberty of the person as against arbitrary acts of the State. The same also applies to independence in the administration of justice, for the business of the Reich in this respect is only to see that good laws are interpreted and administered by wise and righteous judges. To our modern feelings, any attempt at political intervention in the course of a law trial would be inadmissible, and such an attempt always in the long run turns against those who exercise it. We have had a striking example of this in the Reichstag fire trial.

For the creation of real freedom for a nation, there must be first of all the liberation of youth from the incidentals of family or social fetters, not, indeed, by the creation of a uniform, militaristic way of upbringing, but by giving the same chances to all, and by the change of professional life—by breaking, for example, the educational monopoly which, until now, only the upper classes had at their disposal. The National Socialist State, which promises freedom to the people, does not yet understand this. Already, and

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after but one year of power, it may be said to have extended its control to spheres which are, by both divine and human right, closed to it.

In this connection may be instanced sterilization, euthanasia (as it is called), and the arbitrary arrest. The exclusion of the people from any share in the carrying out of the common will, and its rule by a narrowly confined circle of men, who are responsible to no other independent Court, belongs to the same category; and thereby National Socialism has brought Germany back to a state which had seemed to have been outgrown centuries ago. Those who live outside the German frontiers may for a moment briefly picture to themselves what this means in practice. Germans, who today travel out of Germany into other countries, are usually for some time unable to "find themselves" again in the old order of things, failing, as they do, to realize that there are countries still in which their every word and every step is not watched by eavesdroppers, or in which every ill-considered syllable does not necessarily involve the risk of imprisonment for a term of years. Such travelers often give the impression of having just escaped from the scourge of a terrible illness, and of being constantly afraid lest they may come again in contact with its contagion. They go through the streets with uncertain steps, looking round about them to see whether anybody is following, whether there is someone near who is listening to their words in order to denounce them.

A friend of mine whom I met in Switzerland,

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shortly after he had come from Germany, stopped in honest amazement in front of every newsagent's shop, for he simply could not understand that it was still permissible to display openly other than National Socialist newspapers. Even the poster hoardings surprised him, for in Berlin and the other big cities hardly any of these remain. All these things seemed to embarrass my friend, with the result that whatever he did was done in a subdued or oppressed fashion; nor was his by any means an exceptional case, for the elimination of freedom has already reached such a stage that even the most private matters, such as love and friendship, are subject to an iron discipline which obliges everybody to conform to National Socialist requirements.

Men and women are no longer at liberty to devote themselves to the service of the nation or of a cause, according to their talents or their inclinations; while in all the relations and contacts with life they are surrounded, spied upon, and supervised, and if they can no longer bear this, or if someone begins to suspect them, they must be prepared to face even physical violence.

It must not be thought that it is only the eighty thousand people in the concentration camps, with twice that number in the political prisons, who were sacrificed to strengthen the National Socialist cause. Nor does it mean anything if a few people are with much formality set free—in place of them, unnoticed by the public, numbers of others are at the very same time being robbed of their freedom. The

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whole of Germany has become a prison, a gaol in which only the prisoners' innermost thoughts are now allowed to go free; but, just because of these inmost thoughts, the leaders of the Third Reich cannot find peace, for they have quite as little liberty, yea, even less, than those whom they have robbed of all human rights. They are slaves to their own evil will and to the consequences of the deeds for which they are responsible; and that is why they seek, by wholesale measures of propaganda, to convince the people that at last they have achieved real liberty.

They themselves know so well, however, that this exceeds the rhetorical capabilities of even a Dr. Goebbels, that they talk constantly about the "Common Weal", insisting monotonously that this is far more important than the welfare of any individual. This opinion, generally valid though it be, does not apply in the present instance, where the whole community and the single person must stand or fall together. Civilized people of the twentieth century have escaped from the stage of mere group consciousness, which only allowed them to speak of "I" in so far as they belonged to a blood confederation, and it is impossible to return to that which has become foreign to our consciousness.

The National Socialists do not know that there is a third stage, wherein the first repeats itself, after overcoming the despotism of the eighteenth and nineteenth and even the beginning of the present century, under quite different conditions, and they do not desire to bring this stage about, realizing, as they do,

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that their only chance of support lies in an appeal to mass consciousness in its most primitive forms.

Thus it becomes necessary to consider these matters somewhat more fully. What is going on in Germany today will not enrol a single person in a community of brotherhood in accordance with our historical traditions. If it be asserted by those who try to see at least one good thing in National Socialism, that it has brought about a union of the people, and that it has overcome all divisions of its classes, we reply that it is never possible to gain such an end by force, nor can the community as a whole be liberated by depriving individuals here and there of their liberty. The absolute conception of the individual is reserved to a State which marches with the times, but this idea is only practicable in States where every individual stands as a representative of the community as a whole, just as in the Catholic conception of sacramental marriage the husband symbolically represents Christ, and the wife the communion of saints. Any movement which seeks to bring about a state of unity by force is very far from perfect, and since such outward unity is in reality a bondage and cannot be disguised under some other name or explained away, it is a negation of the people's inherent rights, of which no power on earth can properly deprive them.

Liberty as a basic and ethical demand of man has its counterpart in the law of brotherhood, which covers the whole world. Without it there is no life, and nothing great can be achieved without sacrifice.

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This thought appears in all the realms of nature, from mineral to plant and then to animal and to man; and so the greatest amongst men, who understand, place sacrifice before reward and confess the origin of their spiritual power by the humble formula: "*Servus servorum Dei*", thus implying that respect for the liberty of other people is a rule of universal compulsion, without which no exercise of power can be justified.

Only he who practises humility can show proper respect for the liberty of others, and therefore wherever humility is lacking there will be found bondage and slavery—not rule and order; and as we know quite well that no humility is to be sought for in any of the works of National Socialism, which is always saturated with ambitious desire for power, it may suffice to show it here, Medusa-like, its own picture. There is little occasion for expressions of opinion, and all the less, indeed, when we remember that the Weimar Republic did little but talk for fourteen years, judging it necessary to refute with elaborate argument matters which were put forward seriously by those who proposed them.

We have said that National Socialism and what in that connection is described as "liberty" are conspicuous by their lack of humility; and that this is really so appears from its activities as a whole, while all the actions of its leaders are without such a spirit of mercy and toleration as is shown by every really great personage who holds a position of power. We can justify this assertion in the most abstract as well as the most concrete spheres, for where is liberty more

Freedom and the National Socialist State strongly stressed than in the teachings of the Gospel, and in such mundane creations as have resulted from them. It is primarily in the sphere of religion that the soul does not tolerate compulsion, for there it is subject only to the law which is to lead all men regardless of race and creed to union with God—the highest measure of freedom.

For the National Socialist, however, the religious world is merely another means of achieving his political aims, and it is in the hope of concealing this that they announce their desire to cleanse Christianity of all secular and Jewish influence, and that they have nothing else in mind but to give the people a "German consciousness of God". The conflict thus caused in the Protestant Church becomes therefore of considerable importance, even though the differences of opinion appear to have been patched up; for it shows that there are now, as before, fearless and upright men who remember the words of Holy Scripture that God is to be obeyed rather than man.

These things are also essential in the fight against Communism, which is only too ready to admit the importance of economic and class-bound forces. I myself took the view some time ago that there would be, to all intents and purposes, a religious revolution, whereon the German fight for liberty would depend; and in an argument with a Communist I told him that at any rate this was true—it was not the workers themselves, but the three thousand clergymen who had first dared to resist the National Socialists after they



Freedom and the National Socialist State had seized power. There is no need to be surprised at this, for the idea of Protestant freedom has persisted already for several hundred years, and will not be forced into dependence. The opposition of the three thousand may therefore have shown to many that National Socialism is guilty of misrepresentation when it styles itself "a continuation of Wittenberg" (i.e. of the Reformation). National Socialism has just as little in common with real Catholicism as with Martin Luther, who was assuredly the originator of the modern idea of freedom.

In the history of the world, there have been powerful despots who were great men, even though they were without humility. The reason why they knew nothing of mercy was because they expressed with all their might the idea of their own omnipotence, and not because they were, like the leaders of the Third Reich, too small and too despotic to give way.

Yet here also it is true that the greatest men have been those who had humility. Ernst Kantorowicz, the biographer of the Hohenstaufen Emperor, Frederick II, who is frequently alluded to in this book, relates that he who had fought against the Papacy and all that spiritual power which the Papacy represented, but which he found harmful to the Western Empire of his century, discarded the imperial robes and put off his jewels before his death, donning in their stead the modest grey garments of a Cistercian monk; and there is an old German legend, which has been preserved in one of the earliest sayings of the Meistersingers and so has come down to

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our own times, foretelling that the promised future ruler of the world should place his crown and his shield on a barren tree, which would thereupon blossom and bear abundant ripe fruit.

This absence of humility and the consequent impossibility of freedom also explain the cold and inhuman atmosphere surrounding everything that concerns the Third Reich. The festivities of the National Socialists remind me of a fairy tale which I used to read as a child, about an island, the inhabitants of which became so lethargic and dull and lazy in their outward actions that at last they forgot all about the sun, which gives spirit and life to earthly things. They had all but forgotten its existence, and did not trouble about it until it really ceased to shine, and the country became full of fog and damp. The people turned yellow and cold, and though in haste they set about their daily work with no daylight to guide them, and although a thousand things were industriously started, the completion of these did not satisfy them. At last they thought they had found out what was wrong, and so they went to their King to complain. They told him that they had forgotten how to laugh and be merry, and he therefore decided to provide them with an artificial sun. He ordered a festival to be held, which would cost untold wealth, and which was the most elaborate affair that anyone in the island had ever seen. The whole country was illuminated by torches, while great rockets were sent shooting across the sky, and all the people were supplied with abundance of food and wine. Then

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they began to scream and to shout, and the King was glad and thought that this was real laughter which had returned to his people, though it meant no more than that they were all intoxicated.

And so we should not be surprised if something of this sort happened if the National Socialists proclaimed a day and called it the Festival of Freedom. I believe that only resolute leadership can restore—and that, moreover, only after taking very great pains—the liberty which has been lost. Of what use are these festivals, where every natural expression of liberty is forbidden and when people are so hemmed in by a system of espionage that no child can feel safe with its parents, and no father can feel safe with his child?

Fear of the ghost of the liberty which they have killed accounts for the National Socialists' present-day lack of humour. Even the most harmless joke is accounted an attack on the safety of the State in Germany, and a newspaper (*Dortmunder Generalanzeiger*) was, as is well known, first banned and then turned over to the National Socialist party, because it had reproduced an exact portrait of Hitler without first retouching his features. Self-criticism is impossible without a sense of humour, and so there is no hope that the leaders can ever come to a better understanding.

Now there are certainly forces over which no-one has control, the free action of which cannot be hindered by any human power. It is possible, of course, to prohibit wireless sets, to do away with the

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freedom of the Press and to cut off the German people from intercourse with the outside world; but it is not possible to stifle the subtle expressions of thought which defy all prohibitions and can penetrate every barrier that may be set up against them.

The leaders of the Third Reich make constant use of so-called "legal" proceedings in such matters, but yet they fear the consequences, for they know quite well that, against these expressions of thought, terrorism is in the long run of no avail. They try to achieve their object therefore by means of persuasive propaganda contained in the falsified reports in daily newspapers or uttered on the platforms of mass meetings, and by these means they hope to win the support of those among the people who still have the courage of their convictions. In spite, however, of thus employing every means at their disposal, they have had but small success in such efforts to hypnotize the people into their own way of thinking, as could be observed during the Reichstag fire trial, in the course of which the suppressed impulses of the German people broke out so strikingly on behalf of liberty that the spectacle became a farce in the eyes of anyone who had not lost the power of sight—nor could any efforts of the Censor prevent this.

"Let Justice take its course" is an aspiration that many millions share, and therein survive many of the things that seemed to be lost when liberty was forcibly curtailed.

It should not be supposed that such matters are of philosophical interest only—they are the decisive

Freedom and the National Socialist State factors in the coming upheaval, which must be well prepared beforehand in the hearts of men. Every day the weight of the accusation becomes heavier and heavier, and the time cannot be far off when the buffoonery, which the leaders have sought to cover with their preposterous "seven veils", will become apparent to all. Destiny will take its course since, as we have already said, even the leaders themselves no longer have any real freedom. They cannot ever act as they themselves would wish—they are unable even to turn back, which is what they must surely sometimes very greatly long to do. That the ending of the fire trial was possible at all, or that any of the men who had been chosen for arrest should have been allowed to escape, signifies at least the beginning of judgment; for in man, to whom all things on earth are subject, the whole mighty universe is comprehended and, thus regarded, a single person can stand as the representative of millions.

We may therefore proceed to examine the phenomenon of National Socialism in an attempt to determine what is likely to follow it; and we must try to prevent, at all costs, that National Socialism should be succeeded by other products of those very forces which made its rise possible.

We believe, in the first place, that not Social Democracy is destined to lead Germany to the new freedom of the future, since that would imply the growth of a generation with the firm belief that the way to freedom is to be found in the complete disregard and avoidance of such things as history,

Freedom and the National Socialist State religion and tradition. It is the extension of bourgeois materialism to the working classes, in the spirit of the young clerk who sports a monocle and at once begins to fancy that he is playing the part of some maligned but much-envied member of the aristocracy. Such a mentality would but lead to a wider and more severe bondage; for the populace would, under such a rule, become more and more enslaved by a primitive belief in progress, which would make them, of necessity, shallow in the extreme.

Another danger that threatens, and the possibility of which must not be forgotten today, is the political and practical succession of Hitler by a force composed exclusively of Junker Conservatives—which would ease the pressure slightly, and thereby create the illusion of a newly gained freedom. The consequence of this would be a further growth of the Communist idea, until it finally emerged victorious over the freedom of every individual and of Europe itself.

The quest for German freedom did not begin with the Great War. Preceding centuries were dominated by it, from the time when the Reich lost its splendour and came under the rule of innumerable Princes who divided the country among themselves, as is clearly demonstrated in the dramas of Frederick Schiller and of Goethe (*Goetz von Berlichingen; The Robbers, Intrigue and Love*, etc.).

Fate is sparing in the opportunities that it offers to nations and, if one of these should be missed, a long period may sometimes have to pass before

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another chance comes. We are thinking at the moment of all that might have been done in the period after Napoleon. At the time, it looked as though Germany was to be given general internal freedom to arrange her own affairs, following the collapse of so many German thrones under the sword of the great Emperor. These days were often recalled during the Republic, and on many occasions mention was made of Baron von Stein, to whom was committed the great task of leading Prussia, the most powerful of the German States, to social and political freedom. He it was who undertook to remove the medieval bondage of the farmers, and to accomplish a fair distribution of the land. But Baron von Stein, before this task was completed, lost his power, and it was the same forces of the Junkers that brought about his fall as those which have made the work of Dr. Brüning impossible.

At that time the landed aristocracy were telling the King of Prussia that he, the Baron, was a Jacobite; and it was their grandchildren who assured Hindenburg that Brüning was a Bolshevik, when they desired by his dismissal to pave the way for the annihilation of that German freedom which they so detested. And just as then, after the Napoleonic wars, the people were cheated out of the fruits of their sacrifices while the darkest forces of reaction came to the fore, so is it also today. "In the name of the Fatherland and in the name of the nation's ever sacred possessions" the nation itself has been robbed of its most sacred heritage.

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It was for the sake of freedom that many of the noblest Germans went into exile during the first half of the nineteenth century, or suffered imprisonment or even death for their convictions. In spite of all persecutions, however, the idea survived and, strengthened by the constant addition of new recruits to its ranks, freedom was ever trying to reach its goal by new means.

In this regard, the year 1848 was of very great importance, for it was then that the black-red-golden flags of freedom fluttered for a little while during the German revolt, and that the police system of Metternich and his Prussian and South German partisans collapsed. It is true that the opponents of freedom soon gathered their forces together again, but the memory of what had happened survived and was even discoverable during Bismarck's rule. The Germany of William II was indeed a paradise of freedom compared with the same countries and the same people under the Third Reich today; for then there was freedom of opinion, there were free artists and scholars, and the truth might be spoken even to the Monarch himself by courageous men. If you look at the newspapers of pre-war years, or turn the pages of humorous periodicals such as *Simplizissimus* and then compare them with the mood that is at present predominant, you will have some idea of the state into which Germany has fallen today.

We have been obliged to deal with these matters at some length, in order that no-one may imagine that



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it is really the German people themselves who approve of the policy of Adolf Hitler. Now, as before, the people are longing for freedom above all else, and those of us who are struggling in her name know what it means—Germany must be freed from her territorial bondage, and her subjection to provincial limitations, by the combined endeavours of all. It is the creation of a peacefully united West—this it is which National Socialism will have to oppose, if it means to remain in power until it feels strong enough to subdue the other nations of Europe, which are still free, in yet another European War.

## *Chapter X*

### The Assimilation of the Spirit

**W**e propose in this chapter to deal with one particular aspect of the situation which has just been discussed from a more general point of view. The word "assimilation", however, must be briefly explained. It originated in the year 1933, and was used to give polite expression to the brutal fact that in Germany all manner of conditions, opinions, views, and movements were brought under the dictatorship of the National Socialist party. To begin with, the parliaments of the Free States were "assimilated", after the so-called elections of 5 March, 1933; they were all given a National Socialist majority; and after that, and in the same way, all youth leagues and adult organizations, trade unions and suchlike, and, of course, all newspapers and periodicals and whatever else of the kind there was, were assimilated, that is to say, taken over by National Socialist functionaries.

These measures were outwardly justified by the explanation that, as the Third Reich was a "unified state", it must be directed in all its parts, and from top to bottom, by one will only. It was a matter of course, therefore, that the process of assimilation

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should include an assault upon the intellectual life of the nation, and resolute attempts were accordingly made to bring it into conformity and to make it serve, as much as possible, the purposes of the National Socialist rulers. These efforts coincided, moreover, with yet another tendency, which for many years had been one of the major objects of National Socialist policy—to approach the so-called intellectuals and to obtain from them a formal approval of National Socialist ideals.

This attempt was characteristic of the mentality of the German middle and lower-middle classes, who had always entertained an almost unlimited respect for academic degrees and for titles. On the other hand, the National Socialists wished to remove any doubts that might arise in regard to those parts of the programme that expressed “working-class sympathies” and so proclaimed the united front of all “workers of brawn and brain”. It is a well-known fact that this phrase was even used by Prince August Wilhelm of Prussia, when he had to state his occupation for purposes of registration in hotels. Here, again, we observe the same characteristic trait of National Socialist propaganda—a confusing of heterogeneous ideas while asserting that they were one, in order to pose as the representatives of the whole national community.

It would hardly befit a working-class party to court the *intelligentzia* quite as the National Socialists had done. They were ready enough then to co-operate with all those whom today they are calling

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narrow-minded and un-German; but the majority of the intellectuals who really represented German intellectual life altogether refused to support National Socialism, even before the Third Reich was established. Scholars, as well as artists, opposed the National Socialists by their words and with their pens, and permanent memorials of these "regenerators" of Germany have been preserved in numbers of printed books and in many an immortal drawing.

National Socialists greatly resented this attitude and endeavoured to show the world that they, too, were capable of attracting the intellectuals; but, though they found a few names that served the purpose, they could not get higher than Schultze-Naumburg and Hans Günther during the years that preceded their ascent to power. It must be conceded, however, that as to the scientific ability of Dr. Goebbels no final judgement can as yet be given; but we most sincerely hope that in the near future he may find leisure to devote himself entirely to scientific research, for we have not yet forgotten that his teacher, Professor Friedrich Gundol, is alleged to have described him as a man capable of becoming either a very great scholar or an equally great criminal!

That German intellectuals opposed National Socialism for so many years may be explained by the fact that they, perhaps better than any others, recognized its true character. Partly, however—this, too, must be admitted—their attitude was due to the fact that they were altogether too worn out and too

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weak for the carrying on of a prolonged political struggle. We might for these reasons have approved of an impetuous, youthful movement which should have set aside the claims of those who pretended to possess a monopoly of knowledge and of judgement; but such a description as this does not belong to the National Socialists, who would have offered their services to anyone or to any party that might honour them by recognition. We must not forget, either, that even those who were hostile to the Weimar Republic—and such were found largely among university professors—were, in the majority, very far from accepting the aims and principles of National Socialism. They drifted along with the tide of nationalism, and some of them chose the ideas of Italian Fascism to be their guide in the development of a future Germany, even though they may have found it impossible to reconcile the spirit of the stormtroopers, as proclaimed by Hitler, with their own good taste.

From the standpoint of National Socialism it may have appeared advisable to drive out all who as intellectuals might be suspect. They knew very well that all those were their natural enemies who were able, on the strength of their knowledge and ability, to withstand their influence, and who were yet not so corrupt as to affect the possession of National Socialist convictions.

The National Socialists, however, were not satisfied with merely accomplishing a simple exchange of functionaries. With rigid and stupid adherence to a principle which was described as “totali-

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tarian", they desired to abolish the intrinsic values of purely scientific research and to displace the disciplines of philosophy, law, and so on, by National Socialist philosophy, National Socialist law, medicine, theology, art, and all the rest of it. That there are, even today, a certain number of intellectuals who still go quietly on with their appointed tasks can only be explained by the fact that many of them, of their own free will, terrified perhaps, but yet with a sort of cultivated masochism mingling with their terror, submitted to the violence offered by strong-legged stormtroopers—those archetypes of the new German spirit; and that then this *intelligentzia*, being at the mercy of the new régime and wishing to explain to others their startling and very often quite sudden change of mind, contrived a complicated series of irrational arguments, such as might have been extracted, ready made, from the journals of the fashionable drawing-room Bolsheviks in regard to Russia.

It would be to no purpose if we were to enlarge here on the numerous apologies for and apotheoses of National Socialism which have flooded the book market, the work of men who might have been expected to know better. Such development should not surprise us, as it was to be expected, and even the leaders of the Nazis might have foreseen it. It was no more than a symptom of the inner weakness of their movement that they should have thought it necessary to dispatch such numbers of armed troops even to the remotest farmers' organizations in order to establish the Third Reich among them.

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If they had really understood anything about the mentality of the leaders and official representatives of intellectual Germany, they might have safely left them severely alone until they capitulated, as inevitably they would have done, to the powers that be. As regards the truly German spirit, it was always unwilling to be organized into academies or associations. Germany's greatest poet, Stefan George, who died on the very day on which these lines are being written—4 December, 1933—did not even reply when he was notified by the National Socialist Government that they had appointed him a member of the recently "assimilated" Prussian Academy of Poets.

It is the deeply rooted sense of inferiority—a complex, as the psychologists would call it—by which many Germans are possessed when they have to face a situation that cannot be dealt with by any formula or even by a military command, which accounts for the attitude of the National Socialist movement towards the *intelligentzia*. They were sensitive to the fact that they were being laughed at by all who were above the level of the bearded patriot. Out of spite, and moved by a desire to show their superiority, they adopted the role of the hardy warrior who would show some bloodless intellectual what the two of them respectively are worth.

This feeling was perhaps most strongly developed in Adolf Hitler himself, who, emerging from the lower ranks of artisans and not even of German nationality until long after he came to live in Munich, has always remained the *petit bourgeois*. For

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the university man he has always shown the deepest respect imaginable, and it was because he failed to notice a similar respect in their treatment of him that he became angry with those whom he was only too ready to admire. He was not, however, conscious of this sense of personal inferiority where artists were concerned. By a process well known to every psychologist he was able to sublimate his feelings in this direction by calling himself a worshipper and a favourite of the Muses, by frequenting concerts and operas, by emphasizing, in speeches as well as in what he wrote, his deep appreciation of the arts of painting, architecture, and music, which triumvirate he is accustomed to call the "Queens of the Arts". It is easy to understand that he should wish to feel himself master of one subject at least, and why should this one subject not be the fine arts? The question is the more readily answered when we remember that, according to a passage in his book *My Struggle*, even his bad school reports were only a result of what he calls the artistic impulses of his creative soul.

Of Dr. Goebbels also it is said that he joined the National Socialists in order to have an opportunity of seeing his novel *Michael* appear in print, which actually happened later when it appeared in *Der Angriff*, the paper of which he was the editor, after the Ullstein Publishing House had refused it.

Thus we find them all happily together in perfect harmony, and the assimilation of minds, as illustrated from the Ullstein song (*Sei sparsam, Brigitte, Nimm Ullstein Schnitte*—"For your pocket's sake,



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Brigitte, use Ullstein patterns"), to the Horst Wessel Song, is complete; for in this Germany, that accepted Hitler as a leader, a generation of anti-National Socialists had arisen whose mentality was no higher than that of the man whom formerly they held up to ridicule, and this might even be said also of some of those who now live abroad. Even as the National Socialists, so do these anti-Nazis identify Hitler with Germany and so, instead of serving the country that gave them their cultural background, they have become outright traitors, although at the present moment their services would have been more useful than ever.

As for many of those who remained in Germany, unless they hold themselves in monastic seclusion, they become ensnared by attractive catch phrases, like the last of the stormtroopers, though it is true that they attempt to apply an intellectual interpretation to these slogans. As one of many examples we might point to Gerhart Hauptmann, who as early as the days of the Papen commission undertook to play a role that, when he gave up his former independent attitude, exposed him to much criticism. In this case a great deal may be attributed to personal vanity; for I refuse to believe that he did not either see or understand what was going on in Germany. The poet of "The Weavers", who has given to the German stage the most inciting song that was ever written, should not have been able to see in the Hitler Government the strongest supporter of the "Herren Dreissiger, die Henker und die Knechte ihre

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Scherger"? Nor should he have believed that the revolution which has taken place will bring about such a change of conditions as he dreamed of in his youth. A few changes in the teaching staff of a university do not imply a reformation—especially when we recollect that it was the most capable men who were expelled.

I do not feel called upon to say very much about Mr. Hanns Heinz Ewers, except to record a remark that was made in my hearing the other day: "Formerly", it was said, "Ewers used to write sex novels that had nothing to do with politics; nowadays he gives to the same sort of novels a political background."

Yet another example of the assimilation of the spirit might perhaps be found in the case of the distinguished surgeon, Professor Bier, of Berlin, though perhaps it ought to be added that, as one of his colleagues stated, even in former years the professor was accustomed to advocate the extinction of incurable patients, so that his present outspoken approval of National Socialism need not necessarily signify a recent change of mind.

It is characteristic that those intellectuals who gave themselves up to National Socialism have never asked: "How does National Socialism differ from what we still had in December 1932? What is it that has actually happened?" They take no trouble to answer this question, but simply say that there must be some justification for National Socialism, otherwise it would not exist, and then they go on to

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deduce the conclusion that therefore it ought to be approved.

This argument, illogical as it is, is nevertheless so specious that I believe we shall before long find intellectuals, who have so far refused to approve, gradually finding their place within and offering their services to the new State. In this way it might appear as if National Socialism itself had created a new German spirit, and now must be regarded in a different light. In truth, however, it will be but a reappearance of those who formerly, with the same callous and unthinking indifference, gave their services to Socialism, to Liberalism, and to the Weimar Republic. They cannot create anything new—they can but offer evidence that their fires have fallen low and then at last burnt out.

It was for such reasons as these that we said it really was not necessary for the National Socialists to bother very much about the German intellectuals, who in reality are their most faithful servants, so lacking in vitality and so unproductive that they are even proud of the feeling of embarrassment which occasionally overcomes them when they see storm-troopers marching. This is the only possible explanation of the fact that even those who originally possessed clear and good ideas as to the community of the future are beginning to doubt, and are beginning to ask themselves whether perhaps the Third Reich may be the right thing after all, and all their former hopes but vain illusions. They will quite possibly argue that history always approves of anything that

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has become an accomplished fact; but this must be taken as yet another proof of the corrupting influence of power, though of course it testifies most of all against those who allowed themselves to be corrupted. A time will come when the German people will no longer have any patience with the complicated arguments of intelligent men, who hoped to have their personal problems, which should have been their own concern, solved by the swastika.

The majority of the German intellectuals had for a long time past lost all intimate contact with the masses. Their world was built, of imagination or reflection, on the foundation of their own egotism. They knew nothing of the really productive sections of the nation, nothing even of the historic laws that have decided its growth. When, at last shamed and disgusted by their own self-centred mode of life they ventured out of their loneliness, they sought contact with anything in which they thought they could perceive signs of vitality; and for the people as a whole this mistake of the intellectual classes was of the gravest consequence. The masses of the people were to such a degree held down by distress and by a struggle for their daily livelihood that they were unable to take part in the intellectual life of the nation as creative factors—and this, after all, was really not their proper task, since that life was dominated by those who in the possession of greater means and better education had been able to broaden their views. The only thing they could ask the lower classes to do was to listen to them, to accept what they were

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told, and then to digest as much of all this as possible—and this, as it happened, the German proletariat was well fitted to do.

These seeming digressions are nevertheless important in a broad view of politics, since it is impossible to fight Communism unless the whole nation, disregarding class distinctions, is ever mindful of the fact that though composed of many parts it is yet a single organism in which each part has to fulfil conscientiously its particular task.

But how about Germany? On the one hand there are the *intelligentzia* who hold themselves aloof from the masses, and whose only purpose in life would seem to be the cultivation or the resolution of their complexes. The intellectuals, therefore, were the first to surrender themselves as well as the whole nation to the despots; and, on the other hand, there is the proletariat, patiently waiting, but waiting always in vain, to hear from the lips of their supposed leaders the word that shall bring them their release.

It would be unjust, however, to hold National Socialism responsible for everything, for the Weimar Republic itself was no better. We ourselves shared the experience of its spiritual crisis in the dim atmosphere of the "Romanisches Café" in Berlin, where self-satisfied would-be writers, posing as the representatives of justice, liberty and progress, joined in the bustle of revolutionary plays by which the upper classes were seeking to rid themselves of their fears and of their responsibilities. In the time of the Republic, just as today, there was a great gulf fixed between

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the scholars and the men of letters and the lyrically inclined war profiteers on the one hand, and the masses of the people, longing for deliverance, on the other.

Although, when I discussed the plan of this chapter with friends, they all agreed that if it was to serve its purpose it ought to give many individual instances, I do not believe they were right, for I intended, when I entitled it "The Assimilation of the Spirit", to indicate that the general level of intellectual life has been lowered and all genuine individuality quenched.

The title might just as well have been "The Transformation of Mediocrity", for only the outer forms have changed. The military strain still prevails in Germany, so that we read of full-equipment marching to which law students are subjected, of climbing practice for modern-language teachers; and we may perhaps expect that before long physicians and philosophers will be told to take a turn in cleaning stormtroopers' barracks.

From the cradle to the grave, people are being made to live their lives in accordance with certain set standards, and already we hear of students who take their university courses in a big city rather than in the smaller towns because in the latter they are compelled to sacrifice even more of their valuable time for National Socialist duties. They say that they are in this way handicapped in their studies and placed at a disadvantage, especially where girl students are concerned.

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What will the National Socialist government do to remove this just grievance? Forbid girls to go to the university? And all this sort of thing is being done to satisfy the clique of those who have come suddenly to the top and are now holding in their hands supreme power over Germany. Viewed from this standpoint—and it is the standpoint which the German intellectuals should have taken—there is but little difference between the present and previous forms of National Socialism. I have always held it to be guilty of high treason committed against the German spirit, and I fail to see why the conquest of a few cabinet offices should induce me to alter my conviction. For the brain substance of the men who occupy these offices does by no means automatically change when they happen to change their seats. And least of all can I believe that those official posts that the Weimar Republic gave away in January 1933, through Herr von Hindenburg and the banker Baron Schröder, were capable of effecting such a magical change.

And if all this holds true with the leaders, why should it be different with the rank and file, who are still what they always were, so that to take their voice for the voice of a newly awakened German intellectual life would mean to make the mistake of the country lad who came to the city and there mistook the oglings and the alluring words of painted women for promises of true love.

Greater, however, is our surprise when we learn that many, and even the most highly placed, priests of the Catholic Church fall in with the uniformly

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“brown” line in Germany, so that they do not hesitate to have the words “Heil Hitler!” precede the customary greeting “Praise be to Christ our Lord!” More than that, they seem able to congratulate themselves because, as they say, “Christ is not yet reckoned to be on the same level as Hitler”. We shall have to deal with the fateful aspect of this point of view more than once before our discussion comes to an end.

I know myself what those National Socialists who still might care to “convert” me will reply. The National Socialist philosophy, they will insist, cannot be reduced to rational arguments, but must be considered as an experience of the inner life that cannot be expounded or interpreted. In this case—and rational arguments are almost invariably rejected by the representatives of the point of view quoted above—no reasonable reply can be offered. These people take shelter behind an emotion that can neither be explained nor disproved, for it is maintained by sheer will, and for nothing in the world would they relinquish it, because a loss of this emotion would necessarily be followed by a recognition of conditions as they really are, and this would be unbearable. Only one comment therefore needs to be made: that a thing is not necessarily good for the simple reason that it cannot be explained rationally—otherwise we might be obliged to show understanding for and approval of the burning of widows or cannibalism.

These words are meant for those only who still are able to view conditions in Germany with an un-



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dimmed eye. They will have no meaning for those who deliberately discard reason and are content to remain half asleep for fear lest they should be obliged to look upon their own shortcomings. They must of necessity refuse to find, behind the hazy ecstasy of National Socialism, the very thing they tried to get away from—shrewd scheming and clever management.

But the "Assimilation of the Spirit" has yet another significance. Not only were a few single persons forced to relinquish their individuality, but, besides, the general level was forced down to the standards of the lowest rank stormtrooper. This explains why, as a matter of fact, many Germans today find satisfaction in the new state of affairs, for they are saved the trouble, and freed from the obligation, of self-development. No independent thinking is expected of them—to fall into line or to take part in a full-equipment march is all that is required; and it will be seen in time that many of those who today prefer to live abroad will begin to go back—not to cooperate in the transformation of the country, but because they will have discovered that it is easy enough to submerge themselves in the general and uniform spirit.

It is this uniformity which the wire-pullers of National Socialism cannot do without if they are to accomplish their political aims; and for this, too, the soil had been well prepared—even in the Weimar Republic it was not allowed to discuss certain matters that were of importance for the peace of Germany and of Europe and might have prompted

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the true welfare of the country. Even then there were fields of life on which only one political view was allowed to find expression—that of the Right-radicals—while any divergence of opinion was treated as high treason. And at this point I am reminded of a personal experience:

On the occasion of a lecturing tour to the east, I had an opportunity to become acquainted with the so-called “border protection troops”, which are spoken of in another part of this book, and I observed how, under the pretence of preventing invasions from other countries, troops were collected and armed for the purpose of overthrowing the constitutional powers of the country. I considered it my duty to give reports on this matter to various newspapers; but, although I did this in the most guarded terms, the *Deutsche Zeitung*, a radical paper of the German Nationals, addressed an appeal to the War Office after only a few days had elapsed, and asked the Minister of War to have me tried for violating certain clauses of the criminal code. This appeal had no results, for my devotion to the cause of the nation was too well known to allow such experiments—but the instance shows what methods were employed from the very beginning. The parties of the Right knew how to represent any action directed against themselves as being detrimental to the interests of the nation, and the courts of law were ready to assist them.

Even readers in other countries than Germany will remember the case of the writer and editor,

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Ossietsky; and under the same head falls the trial of Lieutenant Scheringer, who during the Weimar régime was expelled from the army together with two other officers and sentenced to be confined in a fortress, because they were found guilty of high treason committed in the interest of the National Socialist party. During his confinement Scheringer turned Communist, for which he was permanently kept in prison, whereas his two comrades were released after a very short time.

We see therefore that even under the Republic certain lines of thought were determined for the people by the authorities, and the National Socialists had only to fit the keystone into this one-way bridge that led to the all-German barrack-yard. People abroad, who have no knowledge of these conditions, believe that there is real unity and community of spirit, whereas in truth all intellectual forces have been destroyed. Freedom of action is granted to those only who consciously prepare for military adventures against other nations. The assimilation of the Spirit may therefore be considered ultimately from a strategic point of view, like the construction of commercial aeroplanes and the secret manufacture of poison gas and parts of tanks. The assimilation of the Spirit is the condition for the achievement of Hitler's last aim—to gain by force the supremacy in Europe, and these considerations must be kept in mind by anyone who wants to get a true idea of the aims of National Socialist foreign policy.

It was recently said, however, by someone or

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other, that negotiations of other nations with Germany should now be rich in prospects, as whatever Hitler agreed to at ten o'clock would be approved by the whole nation at two minutes past ten; and indeed there are many unsuspecting people who believe that if only Hitler says "peace" the hearts of his followers will at once be filled to overflowing with peaceful intentions; but this is not really the case, for they "assimilate" only in theory. They know better than that how to interpret the words of their leader, and the discipline which does not allow them to express their real opinions except by a casual glance or a flitting smile—never in words—is truly remarkable.

It is perhaps the most despairing feature of the German tragedy which has here been discussed. It has been necessary to deal with the matter in a general sort of way, since only here and there would it have been possible to introduce a noteworthy, individual name. But this, more than anything else, is significant for present-day Germany. In the following chapter, which is to deal with the position of the Jews, we shall again observe the power of mass suggestion and mass standardization as practised by National Socialism. This movement, which preaches a religion of mediocrity, cannot preserve its power unless the individual is forbidden to think independently, and personal responsibility is replaced by general formulae to which obedience may if necessary be enforced by violence. The brain of the individual is accordingly to be connected with a central

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power station transmitting ideas as well as emotions to ensure the preservation of swastika rule. We make this statement deliberately in the bluntest possible words, because we wish the reader clearly to understand what we shall have to say about anti-Semitism, the full significance of which could not be grasped if it were dealt with as an entirely separate question, even if the reader were willing to accept the abstract arguments which we shall offer on that point.

The following, then, must be kept in mind: all those who represent the genuine German spirit could not and cannot be subjected to this process of assimilation. We do not so much refer to courageous writers like Heinrich Mann and Lion Feuchtwanger (have not the scenes of his Hitler novel of 1923, *Success*, all come to life again?), or to those journalists who have unflinchingly carried on their fight against National Socialism. More important, to our way of thinking, are such men as Pater Muckermann, who has exposed, in his book *Der Mönch tritt über die Schwelle*, the emptiness of the Third Reich and the fact that it is without historical background. Another priest, Pater Strathmann, was leader of a strong Catholic peace league, and was kept for months in a concentration camp.

Most important of all is the poet whose name we have mentioned before in this chapter, Stefan George. Even if he had stood alone in twentieth-century Germany, the record of his life and writings would sufficiently assure us and remove all doubts as to the future development of the German mind. From his

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earliest youth he has been the prophet of the all-embracing task and the real mission of his country. He has spoken of the Holy Reich that must and will come, and in his work there lies enshrined the promise of all that will happen in the future.

This is the reason why the National Socialists have always been so eager to claim him as one of their spiritual leaders, and why they tried to steal his ideas to supply the sanction which their movement lacked. We, who claim to be the true representatives of Germany both now and in the future, could never be perturbed by rumours that Stefan George had been converted to and had professed the National Socialist creed, and our conviction has been confirmed by the poet's last will and testament, which directed that his body was not to be laid to rest in the soil of Germany. Few events in the life of a nation are of a similarly tragic significance. When Stefan George died we lost a man whose soul it was that embraced the whole of Germany; and it was for the expression of this idea that he refused to let himself be brought back again to the land that had been his—his in the sense that a field of corn belongs in a spiritual sense to him who ploughs and sows.

These, then, are the limitations set up against National Socialism. Only those could be assimilated who had already fallen victims to an inevitable process of decay or to an intellectualism that entirely removed them from the living world, and made them an easy prey of the swastika. Nothing more was

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needed than a touch of compulsion or a little bribery, either by offering them positions of influence and honour, or in certain cases, it may be, even more material remuneration. Those men who are above such temptations as these cannot be affected by National Socialist ideas today any more than they were fourteen years ago; and so this chapter ends with a repetition of the statement that served as an introduction: There are no creative forces siding with the National Socialists.

The only purpose of "assimilation" was to keep up a pretence that had no real basis, though even such a manoeuvre calls for a certain amount of dexterity—and few will be found to deny to the National Socialists the possession of at least this quality. Perhaps this was even their masterpiece—to exhibit all sorts of things that were not as things that really are!

I do not believe, however, that this success, in the long run, will hold good. Just as the foremost representatives of the German mind are not to be subjected to assimilation, so the notions and emotions of the people as a whole will grow beyond their would-be masters' reach; for German men and women are mentally and spiritually alert in spite of all the noise and violence round about them, and there is no means by which to make them conform, even though the rulers of the Third Reich try again and again to hit upon new ideas and to invent new psychologically effective tricks by which to lull their people to sleep or else to incite them, as the case may be. Conditions in post-war Germany, it is true, made it especially

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easy for the Hitler movement to employ such methods and to achieve such results; and thus we arrive at a conclusion which must be kept in mind during all further discussions.

The National Socialist State did not, in its original conception, possess the sort of power that might have been able to transform the German mind from within, and therefore had to rely entirely on demagogic propaganda and sheer brute force. This, I think, added to their utter lack of creative ability, is the underlying justification for our judgement of this movement.



## *Chapter XI*

### The Jews

**T**he change in the social and intellectual structure of Germany since the war has prepared the ground for anti-Semitism, which was the main propaganda instrument of importance in the hands of the extreme Right opposition to the Weimar Republic.

It is owing to the anti-Semitism of the Nazis that millions and millions of German electors voted for Hitler, as many people hoped that anti-Semitism, together with the pseudo-socialist programme of the National Socialists, would produce better conditions after Hitler had succeeded in seizing power.

Those in particular who had seen better times, or who even imagined that they had seen them, were influenced by the Nazi view that it was the Jews alone who had caused the misfortunes of Germany. They preferred to believe in the guilt of the Jews, as this gave them a simple and ready explanation of the changed conditions of their country. All lower and middle-class officials, teachers, doctors, business men, students and shop proprietors used to be considered as a privileged class in the Germany of the Emperor William II. It is true that they did not belong to the upper class, but they realized this fact

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and quietly accepted it, finding compensation in their superiority as compared with the proletariat which they despised.

Being reduced in circumstances after the War, they became perforce embittered because they were no longer considered a superior class. By adopting the political principles of anti-Semitism they were able to acquire an additional sense of superiority over Jews, and the fact that they themselves were Aryans gave them a new splendour which was shared by the whole of the German nation with the exception of about half a million people. The proletarians were known simply as "Marxists" and they were classed along with the Jews. The middle classes evaded the real issue in this way and disguised from themselves the bitter fact that specially "Aryan" industrials had enriched themselves to the utmost, during the war and during the inflation. They may even have thought that the "unmasking of the Jews" would improve their own precarious economic state. They were furthermore of opinion that, if the real causes of their misery could thus be seen so clearly and so constantly walking or riding up and down the streets there might be a tangible means of overcoming their difficulties by a resort to physical force; much as though some clever man should discover the characteristic bacillus of world economic depression and should thereupon inform all the governments of the world. If such a discovery were miraculously to be made, no-one would any longer be obliged to enter upon dangerous currency experi-

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ments or need to worry about dumping or any other doubtful national extravagances or economies—but any country would be free to make any blunders it pleased and then to deal with the bacillus of the crisis in its own way.

This imaginary example, fanciful though it be, is not an altogether unfair illustrative comment upon what has happened in the State of the National Socialists, where the student, who does not care to work or does not bother to think as much as his Jewish colleague, is no longer obliged either to increase his practical capacity or else to give up his job and set his feet on some less ambitious way. He now has but to wait for the expulsion of the Jews as the quickest and easiest method, after all, of overcoming such inconvenient and disagreeable competitors. The same simple process will also suit the business man, the doctor, the lawyer, the engineer, etc.; but yet, surely, it is an extraordinary method, thus to obtain the illusion of a higher standard by blowing up mountains instead of climbing them.

It very soon became apparent, however, that the small number of German Jews was but an insignificant obstacle in the way of the German non-Jews, so that, after all, oppression of the Jews would not really create much better conditions for non-Jews, and anyone can easily convince himself as to the truth of this assertion.

Famous doctors have been displaced in order that their positions might be bestowed on men who were unknown in the scientific world and who had no

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qualities except the ability to utter brisk words of command. Barristers, who had an excellent working knowledge of laws and usages, were not allowed to enter the law courts and so were driven to emigration or even suicide.

The case of the internationally known Professor Max Alsberg—amongst many others—was a shocking example of this. Doctors, without whose help Germany would not have been able to carry on in the last war for more than three months, were displaced; authors, well known all over the world, masters of the German language, who had a profound understanding of the true German spirit, were burnt in effigy; while on the other side H. H. Ewers, the evangelist of *Alraune*, was crowned; and it is to be regretted, though for reasons hardly contemplated by the originators of the suggestion, that the desire of the National Socialist students, that all books by Jewish authors should bear the legend “translated from the Hebrew”, has not been satisfied.

Medicine, Jurisprudence, the Physical Sciences and many other Faculties—Theology itself amongst them—would have been rendered far more easy of mastery by these students if this had been done. As things are, however, they can plead their racial prejudices and loyalties as an excuse for neglecting many of the most important books, and who will dare to force them to seek for knowledge from Hebrew sources?

These are facts, well known long ago. They are only mentioned here in order that the world may be

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reminded of them. It is of much more importance that everyone should realize that the Jewish question is one in which Hitler has really accomplished all—or very nearly all—that he had promised. In the Third Reich (under Hitler) Jews of a certain financial standing and of international power receive preferential treatment and thus Hitler, without relinquishing his main ideas, is able to further many of the important details of his practical policy.

The object of anti-Semitic propaganda could be seen through quite easily, and it is surprising that the leaders of the Weimar Republic did not oppose anti-Semitism more vigorously than they actually did.

What would be said if anyone should venture to assert that the inhabitants of Oldenbourg—which has nearly as many inhabitants as there are Jews in the whole country—had brought about the misfortunes of Germany? Would not all sincere patriots and all Christian and other philanthropists instantly deny and publicly protest against such a slander? It would be desirable, they would urge, to restrain people who publish such foolish yet monstrous slanders by shutting them up at once in the nearest lunatic asylum. I do not see that there is much to choose between the anti-Semites and these imaginary slanderers of the good Oldenbourgiens. More Oldenbourgiens did not fall in the Great War than German Jews, nor have Oldenbourgiens, so far as I know, done more than Jews for the development of the intellectual life of Germany.

One very simple fact suffices to explain the ease

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and the rapidity with which the anti-Semite propaganda, when once it was begun, spread throughout the country. Not only the members of the National Socialist party were active anti-Semites, but many other people, who had no sympathy with the National Socialists yet had strong anti-Semitic prejudices. Even amongst the members of the Republican parties—including the Socialists—there was a certain amount of latent anti-Semitism and many a man, though he may quite possibly have opposed in public the uncompromising anti-Semitism of Hitler, would have been prepared to admit in private his agreement with the Nazi policy in this matter, even though he might have added that he thought they would have done better to go more quietly about it.

A high functionary of the Socialist party once proposed that the swastika should be approved and used, though not openly—and this was in fact the advice of many who were unprepared to support the wholesale official use of the symbol. It may be true enough that inner feelings might tend to weaken the external defence; but how did it come about that such feelings existed? It would be wrong to shirk the question, as the matter is of decisive importance, and it must be admitted that these people—you would find them amongst the leading men of all the Republican parties—did not expect—like the partisans of Hitler—any personal advantage from the oppression of the Jews.

It cannot, of course, be claimed that the German Jews are altogether without guilt, for it is they them-

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selves who have provoked anti-Semitism in many ways by their own behaviour, and I was not ashamed to insist on this fact in an assembly of the so-called "Jewish ex-service men's legion" (Jüdischer Frontkämpferbund) to which I was invited as a visiting speaker three years ago. It seemed proper for me to accept the invitation and to speak as I did, for although I offered my opinion as a Christian I never denied that I had Jewish blood in my veins, and therefore could not be accounted as personally prejudiced in any way.

Many Jews in the German Republic seemed to possess the knack of making themselves disliked in a disastrous way, while those who did not themselves share in provoking this unpopularity were much in the position of Germans who had not personally helped to create the unfavourable impression which the "*Lodendeutschen*" (Germans with coarse shooting-jackets) produced in many foreign countries before the war.

The arrogant conduct of some German Jews, which began in Germany during the reign of the Emperor William II, and increased in the days of the Weimar Republic, may be explained psychologically by considering the oppression the Jews in Germany have suffered for centuries past. When liberty at last was theirs, they claimed for their own use everything on which they could lay hands and, impelled by a strong inferiority complex, attempted to take an active part in all that was going on, even though they often proved unable to accomplish the tasks they undertook.

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'This was particularly observable at the universities—the forcing beds of National Socialism, not only in Germany but in every place where German students met each other.

In 1926, when I was studying in Geneva, I remember a debating circle for students that was arranged by a young unsalaried lecturer in which nearly all the speeches were made by Jews and where, when difficult problems were raised, it was the Jews who were best qualified to discuss them intelligently. They seemed to possess the gift, which the others had not, of persuading others; even though it was certainly true that the general standard of the non-Jewish students in Geneva was at least equal to that of their Jewish colleagues. There were young men amongst the non-Jewish students who were clever and cultured, and who had high and admirable qualities which the young gentlemen of the "*Kurfürstendamm*", no doubt, had not; but yet the Jewish students had far more ability, generally speaking, to express themselves readily and fluently, and they exhibited considerable oratorical gifts—though sometimes without any very deep understanding.

It was at that time that *Die Weltbühne*, an extremely radical weekly, had great influence in those circles, and many intellectual Jews were interested in the "Great Russian Experiment" in regard to the expropriation of private property. The Jews of that type thought that they could influence the German Republic, in the same way that they could sometimes control the opinions expressed in radical newspapers;



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and when I came to Berlin I found the same state of affairs though in a higher degree. The outlook of the younger Republicans was very strongly influenced by Jewish opinion, and this connection between the two it was which caused the epithets "Jewish" and "Republican" often to be regarded as practically synonymous.

The National Socialists started their agitation in the High Schools at about the same time, and the Republicans ought to have created a Republican organization, not predominantly Jewish-led, in opposition to the Nazis. Instead of this the Republic sponsored a pupils' organization, which called itself the "Free National Pupils' Association", but which never succeeded in accomplishing anything positive. The leaders originated mostly from the Berlin drapery and ladies' outfitting trades; they were young and dissipated, but had older men's ideas, and were thus able to induce the Republic to take them seriously and regard them as men with genuine ideals.

The best of the Nordic young men, some little time after, went over to the Hitler Youth organization, nor was I surprised at this, for the same thing was happening at the universities. Wherever Young Republican organizations appeared, they were ineffective, and many a man who had in general no sympathies with the swastika was on this account driven into the camp of Hitler.

In my immediate neighbourhood I was able to ascertain that the ordinary Jew was but ill qualified

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to sustain the role of a leader and, in my own organization of Youth, all Jewish leaders of lower degrees had very soon to be displaced, as their groups were badly led—they were intriguing, unhealthy, rebellious and, generally speaking, bad companions. These leaders plainly showed their inferiority in regard to fatiguing marches; they were unreliable in emergencies, and incapable of making sustained efforts.

These undesirable qualities were to be noticed, moreover, not only in the organizations of Youth, but also among the adult Jews—yet it is difficult to write of these matters lest one should be considered prejudiced. It is not universally true that you cannot properly pass general judgements after having observed only a few individual examples. One is allowed to generalize in such cases, and it is right to do so—it is even necessary, since every judgement is based on the observation of separate events.

The Jews in Germany disliked the idea that they should make personal sacrifices for the sake of liberty and justice, and you would often find the Jews, who had reason enough to be thankful to the *Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold* for its mere existence by day and night, making fun of the good proletarians who composed it, and affecting to consider it very *goyisch* (non-Jewish) to march in close order. None of us thought it really an advantage to march in close order, but we did it for the sake of having sufficient force to oppose, if necessary, the storm-troopers of Hitler. One of my best friends, a Jew, explained to me, quite seriously, that he could not

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take any part in the military activities of the *Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold* until he saved enough money to order from the best tailor in Berlin a uniform compatible with his sense of social requirements.

The Jews in Germany were too hesitating, they were snobs, and they showed far too much of a sort of sham self-confidence. I remember a Jewish picture dealer, who was a good example of this. He had his domicile in Vienna, but used often to come to Germany. He assessed the value and fixed the prices of pictures by many modern painters, and on his opinion a great number of young artists depended for their existence. He was not a real connoisseur of the arts, but yet had an undoubted flair for market prices where paintings and drawings were concerned. If he read in the papers of the arrival of some famous man, it was his custom at once to invite him to some sort of social entertainment, in the hope of ingratiating himself with society. In spite of the fact that only a very small number of those famous people ever accepted his invitations, even their refusals satisfied him to the extent of assuring him that celebrities were willing to take some notice of him.

This picture dealer, of whom I am speaking, had certain qualities which are typical of some German Jews. He expected to discover fine moral principles in other people, though he was content with a much lower standard for himself; and it will readily be understood that such contradiction between preaching and practice would furnish precisely the soil in which the anti-Semitism of all who came in touch

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with him would grow and flourish; and if even one Jew, as in this case, was able to manufacture hundreds of anti-Semites we have no reason to be surprised that such anti-Semitism should have gone on increasing more and more.

You will hardly tell me, even though these things are perhaps simple and insignificant in themselves to an absurd degree, that people of political education would be content to consider them in that light. I am only trying to indicate how such matters would be regarded by ordinary people, since it is the ordinary people who form the basis of National Socialism. I know, for example, that a film technician, and with him nearly his whole family, became National Socialists just because, although he had had all the ideas and had done most of the work, his name was never mentioned on the official announcements of the film when it was presented to the public as the production of a Jewish colleague; and I can equally well imagine that the things undoubtedly trifling in themselves, which I have mentioned above, might easily influence the opinion of any person.

It cannot be denied that the National Socialists were clever in convincing narrow-minded people who were ready enough to become fanatical partisans of Hitlerism directly they were persuaded that so they might find a chance to right some personal wrong or other. I have already stated that there are only half a million Jews in Germany, and that but a few thousand were in really good positions. The millions of National Socialists, therefore, who hoped

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that National Socialism would relatively improve their social standing and possibly increase their wealth, have realized their expectations only in a very small degree.

The film technician continues to occupy even now only a secondary place, his name not being mentioned in the announcements. His superior in the office at the present moment is a foreign Jew, and there can be no doubt that the Third Reich is prepared to respect even Albanian, Andorran and Bolivian passports.

Apart from individual qualities the Jews are accused by the National Socialists of having poisoned the minds of the German people in the spheres of literature, arts and science—possibly by means of “relativity” as opposed to the positivism of the storm-troopers—and National Socialists almost without exception believe that the Jews have entered into formal alliances with all enemies of the German Empire. If this belief is founded on fact, then it follows that all the 12,000 German Jews, who laid down their lives as soldiers during the War, made the great sacrifice merely for the malicious purpose of ruining Germany!

The Nazis find it difficult to supply convincing explanations when you question them about these things, and the best answer ever given is credited to Dr. Goebbels himself, who replied, when asked why the Jews have wrought such terrible havoc, “because they are non-Aryans”. In any of the exact sciences such an answer would not be permissible, because it

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does not so much supply an answer as pose a new question. Amongst European nations the Finns and the Hungarians likewise are "non-Aryans", so that the National Socialist who would like to agree with Dr. Goebbels will have to apply the same epigram also to them.

There would, of course, be the possibility that Adolf Hitler is granting them, in the form of some decree, political equality with men of his own Aryan origin—and to be convinced of this Aryan origin of Hitler himself you have only to look once at him!

There issued, in much the same way, an official note from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of National Socialist Germany to the effect that the Japanese are to be considered as white people; and there in a single sentence we have the secret of a dictatorial State, which can do such things as God Himself might do, but which would never even be attempted by a State that was merely democratic.

We have already seen that the National Socialists have not been able to prove that the Jews have destroyed German culture, and that when it came to pass that the Nazis were compelled to attempt the proof they were obliged to confess that the impossible task was beyond them. Anyone will be convinced of the truth of these words who knows that great numbers of the German cultured public are showing their antipathy to the latest products of the Nazi spirit by boycotting the theatres, many of which in Berlin have accordingly been forced to close their doors.

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Where, then, must we look for evidence of the new German culture of National Socialism? We must point for this purpose to the displacement from their proper occupations of all Jewish actors, musicians, doctors and other learned and artistic people, and also of all those Aryans who were not prepared to become strict partisans of the National Socialist programme; and we can add that the new German "cultured class" consists of the people who remained in their positions, and that though this may be worked out mathematically by a boy of nine or ten years of age, who may have got no further with his sums than the method of subtraction, it has nothing whatever to do with productive improvement.

Every new epoch produces its own style, and it was therefore of paramount importance for the new Germany that there should be development in art. For centuries past, poets have sung the story of Alexander the Great and, when Athens had developed her political activities, temples were built and statues were hewn out and chiselled which were to remain among the world's most treasured possessions for thousands of years. The Gothic style was developed in Italy during the time of the Emperor Frederick II, and the Augustan empire produced a flowering of all the arts round about the Mediterranean. Caesar gave encouragement to the arts of all times, and for this his name will always be remembered and revered.

But what about Adolf Hitler? Where are the poets, and the painters and the sculptors who have created an abundance of artistic products inspired by the

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spirit of Hitler? You will look for them in vain. The German arts in the Germany of today are sterile because there is now no room for historical tradition.

It would be an exaggeration, however, to assert that Hitler has actually destroyed the arts, for all great German artists of the twentieth century, such as George, Rilke and other important names, have been beyond the reach of his understanding, so that he had no power either to destroy or to develop them. Yet who did not expect something better when it was foretold that the Third Reich would realize the intense longing of centuries? The question that we asked about the Republic may be repeated here in connection with National Socialism: Where is the new National Song? Is it the song of Horst Wessel, "With banners high, and serried ranks, storm-troopers march with calm and steady step"; or the song, "When Jewish blood is dripping from our knives, and only then, the better times will come"; or any of the other poetic barbarisms which are to be found in National Socialist literature? No, indeed, it must not be said that Judaism has hindered the development of German culture! Germany has not yet shown her true mettle, nor can she until her true mission is universally recognized.

So that you may see many things which are the objects of Nazi criticism, but concerning which—though their judgements may often be objectively justified—the Nazis have not yet earned the right to pose as critics. The Nazi festivals are—in the minds of the most sensible people—much on a par with the



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spectacular productions of Max Reinhardt, which are full of tremendous theatrical effects, all of which would be unnecessary if their underlying impulses were genuine and true. It is, indeed, unfair that those same critics should reproach Max Reinhardt for having ruined his plays by saturating them with "Jewish materialism" and for having "vulgarized" a whole series of sacred things in order that the public should be intrigued by the realism of everything that was there offered for their immense delight.

Much the same argument applies when the Nazis accuse the Jews of having achieved so much with the help of false propaganda. In the Third Reich everything is exclusively propaganda, which means that it is intellectual misrepresentation, the issue of promises without guarantee, and this implies that this "Reich" itself is but the travesty of a State, a sort of political circus show. The Nazis in fact are doing exactly what they criticized the Jews for doing, and it is an immoral procedure—even in regard to matters that are sacred, whether they be religious or artistic—to condemn another race for doing precisely what you do yourself.

We have seen that the attack on the Jews is in many ways only a mean form of agitation trumped up and organized by irresponsible people. It is based on man's impulse to find a scapegoat in order that he may not suffer for his own wrongdoing. But the German Jews, who are intellectually so capable, should have been able to foresee these things, and to understand that it was in their own interests, as a people, to do nothing

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which might conceivably have encouraged anti-Semitism. I feel therefore that this calamity which has come upon the German Jews has not come without reason, and that they themselves would do well to take to heart the lessons of this warning from the skies.

Let me not be misunderstood, however—I am not excusing the “brown” barbarity in the slightest degree for the blood of the murdered and tortured Jews and the ruined lives of such multitudes of this afflicted race that call for some sort of vengeance. Nor would I wish to imply that there is any justification for the atrocities committed by the Nazis in persecuting the Jews—I only wish to speak the truth.

Even the most violent persecution must come to an end at some time or other, and after that, without the motive of new ideas, anti-Semitism could never be brought into prominence again. But this will only be when the Jews have become once more what they were in the days of the Maccabees, and have realized their true mission towards Germany. In other countries they ought to think of this, too. It was the Jews who gave Jesus Christ to the world, and they should not forget that in the minds of men Redemption will for ever be connected with the race that is of David’s blood; and this is why I cannot understand that Jews should seek to excuse themselves as having “been too long in the ghetto”, or as having “been oppressed too long”. Rather should they be proud of the misery they have had to endure, not as oppressed slaves of the ruling peoples, but as martyrs of justice.

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I am not writing, in this connection, of those Jews who already think of themselves as more German than many Germans who have no drop of Jewish blood, else I might be suspected of paraphrasing the well-known remark that I "know one honest Jew"—said usually by anti-Semites who are hoping to get something out of a Jew.

Nor is it any part of my task to point out to the Jews the exact path along which I think they ought to travel. I would only confess that for my part I consider a reformation of Germany impossible without the Jews. On the other hand, the ultimate fate of the Jews is closely bound up with the existence of Germany. The Jews, as nationals of every European country, perhaps may have the special mission of developing that Western Empire of the future wherein only freedom and justice shall rule. Germany ought to become the centre part of such an empire and, if the Jews can do this, they will become the real "salt of the earth".

All countries whose people are just and civilized will banish anti-Semitism from within their borders once and for all; but the Jews, like the Germans, need a leader. Without leadership they get out of hand; they degenerate and "put their fingers in every pie"; while to their servants they become merciless masters.

The interests of Germany are closely connected with Judaism, and the Jews must therefore bring enlightenment to the country. Up to now it could have been only a case of a blind man trying to

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guide one who was lame, and therein dwells the quintessence of the problem. In a backward, undeveloped Germany, without historical fulfilment, the Jews would again and again provoke anti-Semitism in accordance with the arrogant, undignified, shop-keeping spirit of such a Germany. The Jewish problem is the problem of Germany. If Germany becomes a holy and righteous country, the Jews will be redeemed. In view of the fact that there are Jews living all over the world, events in Germany are followed closely in all countries overseas, and the struggle of the National Socialists against a world-wide people is bound to have immense political importance.

The Nazis are doomed to failure in this fight, not by reason of any overwhelming financial power, such as they sometimes—though falsely—impute to the Jews, but because their attack is directed against a people who have become a significant part of every civilized community throughout the entire world.

## *Chapter XII*

### On the Obligation of the Christian High Nobility of the German Nation

**Y**ou could hardly find today in Europe another country where the political importance of the nobility is greater than it is in Germany; and an explanation of this may be found in the fact that for centuries past many noble families have there been in power, and that not only had they titles and privileged positions like noblemen in other countries, but that they were the actual rulers of their own independent territories.

The whole of German history during many past decades deals with this problem of the central Imperial authority in conflict with German territorial rulers—a conflict which, disadvantageously to Germany as a whole, ended with the victory of the latter. The old German Reich—the origin of which goes back to King Henry the First and his son Otto the Great who in the year 962 made Germany the centre of the Holy Roman Empire—was ruined by this conflict between Imperial power and the territorial rulers, who wanted independent sovereignty in their territories regardless of the interests of the Reich. After the downfall of the Hohenstaufen in the

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thirteenth century, no holder of the "Roman German crown" was powerful enough to prevail against the Feudal States of Germany.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries this absolute territorial power, retained by some of the noble families until the end of the old Reich in the year 1806, found its continuation in the ruling of diplomatic and military life by the descendants of former governing houses.

It is useless at the present day to bewail this development or to regret that Germany could not have been unified in those earlier times, because you can do nothing with historical facts after the event, except use them to try and discover their good and bad points, and in this particular case there were no doubt advantages as well as disadvantages.

It would be a good thing, for example, if the members of the German nobility, who have by no means spent the last thousand years in indolence, could now realize their special mission—their duty in a more complete sense and in a much higher degree than anything imposed upon other classes of the German nation, since this German nobility not only carries far more responsibility than other people, but is allowed neither to retire from public life nor even to take part in class war.

It is at the same time most important to remember that there are two very different classes of nobility in Germany, having only certain external qualities in common, and I have always expressed myself as opposed to the idea that the landowners and capitalists,

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who have at one time or another been ennobled, and who therefore come from quite a different source, are to be considered as identical with those whose origin can be traced from the chieftains of the Nordic people in the earliest times down to the present day; and it is only by sheer force of numbers that the later creations, since being raised to the nobility, have in many cases achieved precedence over the more ancient dynastic nobility of ecclesiastical dignity or of royal descent, and so have come more and more to the front.

The *Junkertum*—a typical name for the landowners of the eastern part of Germany—has left his mark in the new German regions between Elbe and Oder, and it is to be remembered that here a mutual co-operation between Junkertum and princely houses began, which was not to be found in the other territories of Germany. When in 1415 Frederick III—who had less Imperial dignity than any other Roman-German emperor—appointed the Hohenzollerns Margraves of Brandenburg, all the other German countries had already been governed by their own rulers for a long period, and these rulers had throughout that period been partners in a consolidated Reich.

From the beginning, the Hohenzollerns had no great historic traditions, and their power in Brandenburg was bestowed upon them in much the same way that Adolf Hitler appoints the *Reichstatthalter* (governors) of provinces. The Hohenzollerns became rulers at a time of great degeneration both in Reich and in Church. The Imperial power had formerly been in

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the hands of the Habsburger and the Wittelsbacher, but the Hohenzollerns had as advisers men who only looked after their own interests and were not primarily interested in the welfare of the nation. The fight which the Hohenzollerns began against the landowners of the March—such as Rochow, Zitzewitz, Bredow, etc.—should not be allowed to encourage the mistaken opinion that the Hohenzollerns considered themselves as loyal executors of the will of the whole nation. They were striving for nothing more than to become stronger than the other “Junkers” who were hostile to the Empire. The Hohenzollerns were unable to influence their vassals in a noble way, and when after a short time they made a peaceful agreement with their former rivals the ruling house and the nobility began between them to govern the country according to their own ideas.

How did Prussia become independent? The well-known saying that the duchy of Prussia came into existence as the result of a threefold breach of promise against Emperor, Church and Order, is of significant importance; and it is a saying which might with equal justice be applied to much that has happened from that time to this.

We find again and again that the Hohenzollerns took advantage of the above-mentioned “agreement” (with their former rivals) exclusively in their own interests; that oaths were kept and faith observed just as long as the temptations to forswear themselves and to betray their allies were not too strong. If we go back to the time of Napoleon, when the Prussian



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nobility gave up the fortresses of the country to the "hereditary enemy" without a single blow being struck, it would be easy enough to find a parallel between that von Beneckendorff who took the name of Hindenburg in 1789, and surrendered Spandau to Napoleon, and the leading actor in more recent events.

During that epoch, in which the country was broken down, and its resources were threatened with exhaustion under the pressure of an unrighteous social system, it was the Prussian nobility that refused its help to the rescuing work of the Rhineland dynast, Freiherr von Stein, and denounced him as a Jacobin, when the deliverance of the people was at stake.

It was inevitable that these things should have been recalled to our remembrance when we lately saw how, at a time of the most severe inner and outer distress, a man was brought to his fall, willing though he was to continue his work, interrupted so long, for the reconstruction of the nation. Even the methods of attack employed against Stein and Brüning were identical. For always to the Prussian Junker caste it appeared that the most sacred treasures of the nation were imperilled, when they themselves were summoned to renounce any slightest particle of their sterile and obnoxious hegemonic rights. It was more important to their way of thinking to exploit the State to the utmost than that the State as a whole should prosper; and they would rather see large regions of fertile soil lapsing again into wilderness,

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than that a sound peasantry should enjoy a solid basis for its sustenance. These are the same men who for ever have been forward to take the word "national" upon their lips, yet who a hundred years ago would have chosen that Prussia should become an Eastern rather than a Western State, since in the former case they could hope to hold it more utterly under their own uninterrupted control; and the descendants of these same men it was who could never contrive an invective cruel enough against the democratic rights which the Republic had foolishly granted to them also, and who nevertheless made greedy use of every chance that, under this same Republican régime, offered itself for the lining of their own pockets with what should more properly have remained in the pockets of the people.

When any of these nobles let it be plainly seen that he understood the treason and the falsity of those who were his equals in rank, though according to their origins they should properly have thrown in their lots with the people, then they were outlawed and treated as betrayers of the State, though from the others the people did not receive what belonged to them, nor any due support in their efforts to preserve the small share of freedom which they had obtained at so great pains. These men were for the black-white-red and black-white colours; they sang *Heil Dir im Siegerkranz* ("Hail to thee—crowned with Victory"), and yet, when William II lost his throne and was helpless, did nothing for the Hohenzollerns; they spoke scornfully of the leaders, who though they

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were born as citizens or labourers, had yet tried their utmost to raise up Germany, the downfall of which had been caused by the incapacity of the Junkertum; while they exploited the unemployed for the dissemination of malicious propaganda.

But, on the other hand, it was these men who threw open the frontiers to hundreds of thousands of Polish labourers, who were content to work for lower wages than the Germans, and I remember criticizing this action very sharply at a meeting in Posen. I referred to the misery and the terrible state of the harvesters' quarters on the large landed estates, and asked how these things could be reconciled with a good Christian conscience? In the course of the debate people answered my question by saying that they had done everything in their power, and that they had employed Polish labourers because they were able to live more cheaply and at a lower level of domestic comfort than could German labourers. The bold impudence of this argument, and the courage that allowed it to be made public, are significant of the whole class of which we are speaking; but it is just these qualities that produce the power and are the secret of the success of the German Junkertum. It was not surprising, therefore, that in these circumstances the Prussian nobility availed itself of the opportunity to obtain fresh support from National Socialism.

There were no doubt many differences in character and origin amongst these lower nobility, so that the bad qualities just mentioned might be found only in

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those who ranked, not by origin but by the accident of a title, on the same level as the real nobility. It is not even always easy to distinguish between the two kinds of nobility, owing to the evil influence exercised by the Junkertum, which, for example, was not ashamed to assist a movement which described itself as "Socialist"—a word hated by all genuine Junkers. Capitalists and landowners had made an agreement with Adolf Hitler long ago, and so they understood the true character of National Socialism and were prepared for the change. Only one thing seemed to them of real importance, and that was, to bring about the downfall of the Weimar Republic, in which up to a certain point justice ruled. I do not wish to discuss this matter any further, and I have mentioned these facts only in order to show that the enemy was always to be found exactly where one would have expected to find him, and that this has been so for more than a hundred years.

Though it is in no way surprising that the lower nobility went over almost in a body to National Socialism, we are anxious, for the sake of Germany, as to the conduct of the High Nobility, who had never been subject to any ruling prince, except the Roman German Emperor, and who were free and proud of their freedom.

Is it to be thought that these nobles will submit humbly to the stormtroopers? Is it reasonable to expect that this traditional class will easily subject itself to a State that has neither history nor traditions? I for one do not believe that all members of the

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High German Nobility have so far forgotten their former sovereignty that they can be satisfied to be at the beck and call of the Nazi leaders, as suggested by the illustrated papers. I do not want to preach class prejudices, but I think it is the duty of the real nobility to oppose the present leaders of Germany. It may be true enough today that blue blood, as such, is no longer of any great significance—it does not ensure any particular privileges, nor does it help to strengthen a community. The times when only blue blood could guarantee the ability to lead have gone for ever; but blue blood may make a great difference when it flows in the veins of persons who realize their obligations to the whole nation.

The present times demand a habit of clear decisions, hampered by no vague and ambiguous conditions, but not without safeguards. Fate has entrusted to the High German Nobility opportunities which may at any moment place unexpected power in their hands, if they are used in a responsible manner. By this we mean that the proper place of these nobles should be on the side of the people, in readiness to fight for the rights of the oppressed. This is their special duty, because any talk of nobility and chivalry is but empty phrasing unless the mission of the Holy Grail serves as its inspiration.

The mission of the Holy Grail involves a never-ending fight for the sake of the social and spiritual welfare of mankind, regardless of self. This mission is yet unaccomplished while millions of people are still hungering for food, or are oppressed and tortured by

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a despotic ruler. The welfare of mankind, which Germany can do so much to realize, will never be secured in a capitalist, that is to say, in a materialistic and egotistic order of things, and all who recognize this will be uneasy whenever they see portraits of Adolf Hitler, whose features do not give the faintest promise of a good intention, and who is surrounded by helmets of steel, instead of by human heads and human faces.

The High Nobility of Germany, if they fail to appreciate the true conditions, or if they are even content to condone the terrible actions of the present clique of leaders, will be a hundred times more guilty in the downfall of the whole people than if they had been careful to keep their own consciences sensitive and their own hands clean. It should be held intolerable that noblemen have any dealings with the swastika. They should feel that the eagle, the ox, the lion, and man, the apocalyptic symbols on their heraldic shields, are insulted and defiled by this unholy sign, and any man, whose ancestry reaches back almost to the earliest dawn of time, and on whose shoulder rests the responsibility for the just world of the future, should be unable to place himself in any sort of agreement with National Socialism, for in National Socialism we find nearly everything that by his ancient oath the noble was required to renounce—in particular, for example, the allowance of injustice either to himself or towards other people. For our own part we simply cannot understand those who seek to excuse themselves by saying that they are

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obliged to consider the welfare of their families and the safety of their landed property, and therefore dare not oppose National Socialism; nor do we believe that we are alone in thinking thus, for there surely must be many others likeminded, and if at first only two or three noblemen were openly opposed to National Socialism, even that would suffice for a beginning.

The fight for Germany's freedom—and by that we mean the freedom of the whole German people—is being carried on today mostly by those who are beyond the pale of the law. No law court and no judge has any power to grant them justice. Alone, but with a heroism that perhaps has had no equal in the whole course of history, they are struggling to throw off the yoke of National Socialism. Thousands have suffered unspeakable torture, but new thousands are ever crowding forward to fill the gap—the opposition to National Socialism grows wider and stronger, and every unrighteous judgement delivered in their courts does but mean an accession of power to their opponents.

It is a tragedy indeed very much to be regretted by the High Nobility of German nationhood. There may come a change of rule—a new régime where material values would not be very greatly considered—but how can a man hope to play a part in the future State if now he lends his personal dignity and the blazons of his coat of arms to be a covering for those who are like vermin on the body of the German nation?

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The power of the nobility could never have been so great had not the whole populace supported them, and the nobles should therefore be grateful to the people and not give them over into the hands of their tormentors. The nobility, who have always been conscious of their superiority over other citizens, must do something to prove that superiority, lest the Marxist opinion, which separates only those who have possessions and those who have none, be proven right, and lest a wider gap be made in the thin wall that separates the European spirit from the Asiatic idea.

The nobles in the Catholic districts have considered themselves, and have generally been considered, as the most loyal standardbearers of the Church and, unlike the members of the Junkertum, they do not need to join forces with the slavedrivers of National Socialism; but yet they seem for a long time past to have forgotten that it should be their task to solve the national problem of Germany. The nobility is of European origin; their home is in the West (*Das Abendland*); and they must act, showing, in virtue of their lofty German ancestry, the way which may lead to the downfall of National Socialism. Compared to the spirit of opposition which is constantly active throughout the whole world, anything that the nobles do is of but little account if it is merely part of a despotism which is ambitious to rule in Central Europe.

The Communists, who fight alone, are finding it impossible to fulfil their promises, and so the oppor-



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tunities of the nobility might become even greater. Their alliance with capital and with the forces of reaction, with Junkers and sergeants, makes them unworthy of respect in the slightest degree, since these latter have become no more than walking corpses, galvanized and made to look like living men, which came out of their coffins at the beginning of the Third Reich. They may live thus for a little while, nourishing themselves upon the forces of real life, but their time is over. To make common cause with them, as they are, means to sin against the rules of one's own life; but still we should like to see at the head of the masses in revolt against the swastika men of blue blood, which was once incorruptible. The very last hour in which it may be possible for the nobility to fulfil their duties is at hand.

The tragedy of the German people, and the tragedy of the German nobility, are closely connected, but up to now the High Nobility do not seem to realize at what point of development they have arrived. One may read in the papers of S.A. (stormtroopers) festivals, at which German dukes and princes are present as honoured guests or as functionaries of the National Socialist party; and one may find pictures in which the sons of the oldest German families are to be seen in black or brown shirts; so that obviously they are satisfied that what they take to be a spirit of fairness exists now in Germany, though all the forces that fought for the sake of liberty and democracy have been beaten down.

It almost seems as though Junkertum, together

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with the majority of the High Nobility, think they can safely go on doing things in the same superficial way that contented their fathers in Germany in the early part of the twentieth century. No-one would believe that they do not make fun of Hitler—one knows only too well the mentality which thinks of him as a “housepainter’s apprentice”—but they are nevertheless ready enough to profit by his actions. This is no fit temper for the German nobility, and I personally should never oppose Hitler merely on the ground that he was at one period of his life a house-painter’s apprentice.

In the Third Reich you may hear much talk about the affinity of all classes and about the brotherhood of all the *Volksgenossen* (a typical word for all Aryan people, excluding the Jews). Such hollow phrases may be a convenient salve for many members of the High Nobility when conscience pricks them. They go to charity fêtes, and make presents of warm socks for unemployed stormtroopers at Christmas time. Like the German intellectuals we mentioned earlier in this book, they object to “the bad smell of proletarians”, who must be kept away from the grand stand and on whom they look as holiday-makers look at animals in the Zoo. These happenings are like a comic film we once saw, in which “a goodhearted nobleman through sheer boredom takes on the job of a furniture packer. He smashes the dishes and plates, it is true, but people know him for what he really is, and laugh, and are even flattered when their porcelain is broken.”

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It is perhaps inevitable that the German High Nobility should have no idea of the people. They do not know the proletariat, and think all lower classes have the same disregard for historical tradition. I know from my own personal experience that it is very difficult to win back the goodwill of the people, which the higher nobility lost through their own fault; but I know also that the time will come when the workers will rather follow a well-born leader than a man from amongst themselves. With strongly developed sensitiveness they readily recognize the striking difference between a nobleman who accepts the disadvantages of leadership of the people without being a renegade, and a proletarian who, urged on by class-feeling, heads a movement of his colleagues.

It is—as we have seen—of practical importance, when we demand that the German High Nobility should act as leaders of the future German revolt. They would only be carrying on the work, which other nobles, their equals in rank, have done in former years.

All European revolutions—the French Revolution, for instance, and those preceding it—have been strongly influenced by the nobility, and this was true even of the Russian revolution and of the events which led to the unification of Italy. In the November also of 1918 the dynastic nobility of Germany, represented by Prince Max of Baden, played a prominent part, and our opinion that the future revolution in Germany will be influenced mainly by religious feelings finds abundant support in what happened on

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previous occasions, and in the fact that the nobility—in spite of all materialistic and scientific influences—is more closely connected than any other class with the religious sphere, always one of the sources of nobility.

Here we touch upon the point which is indeed the crux of the whole matter. We said above that the nobility are of European origin and are therefore bound to fight for the sake of a European Germany, thus justifying the name which our nobility have had for centuries past—the Christian High Nobility of German Nationhood.

They may be the connecting link between Germany—now shattered and separated from all other nations—and the rest of the world, and may have the task when Germany is reformed again of consolidating the new Germany by their signs, and words, and actions and by the help of their historical traditions.

Though I fear that these words, like all other former exhortations, may have but little effect, it was necessary to deal with these matters, since otherwise Germany might have been reproached for not having sounded a further warning at this momentous time, and therein lay my reason for devoting this chapter to the nobility of Germany.

## Chapter XIII

### Italian Fascism and National Socialism

It may not be out of place, perhaps, to devote a short chapter to Italian Fascism, for Fascism it is that National Socialism so readily takes as its precedent, and from which, for lack of inventive powers of its own, it has borrowed the salute. The comparison between Fascism and National Socialism appeals to me the more because, some three years ago, I published a study of Fascism and its laws as compared to the Weimar system of government.

As is well known, the founder of the Fascist State, Benito Mussolini, came from the Socialist party, beginning his political activity in its ranks as a reporter for the *Avanti*, and it was as Radical representative of the interests of the working class that he won his first laurels. It may therefore be assumed that he knew far more of the essentials of Marxism than did Adolf Hitler, for "Marxism" has remained an expression the meaning of which it must be extremely difficult for him to comprehend.

The birthday of Fascism is generally given as the twenty-third of March in 1919, since on that day the first meeting of Mussolini's collaborators, through whose endeavours the movement speedily gained

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ground, was held. As early as November 1921 all the separate opposition parties became part of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista*. The progress of this party was furthered by the middle-class fear of a coming social revolution and by the disappointment of the nation at the conclusion of a peace which had proved less favourable than had been expected for Italy. The failure of the democratic State to act, together with its waverings between withholding and granting too late, did the rest, so that on 28 October, 1922, the liberal system broke up without a struggle, the March on Rome being no more than a leisurely walk, since there was nobody to challenge it.

After Mussolini had duly revised his original Republican programme, the King himself, on 30 October, 1922, appointed Mussolini head of the Government. Although outwardly lawful, this movement was in everything that preceded this thirtieth of October in reality more of a "Revolution" than the so-called "National Revolution" in Germany, which was first recognized and acclaimed by its leaders when it was actually over.

Fascism, which had become the State, now saw itself faced by a large number of problems asking for solution. Before all else it had to bend its energies upon strengthening and fixing in peoples' minds the extent of its actual power; but for this purpose it soon found some material which had been prepared in Italy before the War, and published in a book by Adolfo Ravá, dealing with the years before 1914, with the title, *Lo Stato come Organismo Etico* (*The State as an*

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*Ethical Organization*). The State is here represented as an organization which has within itself its own morality, and which has therefore the power of formulating conceptions of "right" and of rule according to its own principles. The morality of the State depends entirely on its will, so that law and rule are reduced to dependent functions. Obviously the never-wearying activity of, and the strong emphasis on, Nationalism, and the rejection of Pacifism, are in order to attain the organization of such a State, which is in itself the measure of what is right and the goal of those who seek that right. The importance of the individual is completely denied.

The constitutional State even appears to Ravá as evil since it is a heritage "*dello Stato, opera del diavolo e frutto del peccato*" ("of the State, work of the Devil and produced by sin"). On the other hand the moral-national State (that is to say, any State which claims for itself the sum total of morality) is treated with idolatrous devotion. It will also have the right to interfere in all questions of a private nature, for it is not the individual who comes first, but the State. . . .

Ravá lays particular stress on the conceptions of the "Latin spirit" and of the "Italian mission", and from this it is but an easy step to the denial of Christianity in particular, for the outside observer might feel that the "Nation" could not have a universal religion.

For this reason Mussolini has not followed Ravá in these ideas, although he has taken him as a pattern in almost all the practical consequences of his theory

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of a State. Only in the very early days, when Fascism itself had pretensions of being "religion", and when it still sought to bind its members spiritually also in one single cult, did it come near to the Raváist theories.

But what in Italy was soon subdued—and undoubtedly because of the knowledge that Fascism would be shamed if it should strive after things which must remain for ever denied to it—is still present in National Socialism; but present there, not because of any reasonable hope that it will gain an ascendancy, but only in order to hide with deceptive metaphysics the practical insufficiency of an altogether irreligious system. National Socialism then aims at forming its followers into the true predestined, at making them a "Church" in the purely political sphere, though at the same time it does not wish to renounce the popular educational effects of Christianity, as it conceives them. It must therefore seek to incorporate Christianity within itself, and the forcible annexation of the Protestant Church with its powerful organization serves this end.

It thinks in this way to achieve the consecration which it lacks, and it thinks too that it may take a bit from any altar whatsoever and appropriate it for itself. Because of this it is doubly defective: once in that, contrary to its theory, it is unable to attain any real spiritual standing; and again in that it cannot serve a practical end, which is what every State must do which possesses and cultivates far-reaching interests.



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Mussolini on the other hand is great just because he was conscious of the limitations of his system, and because he had the courage to make it one within the universal circle of the Church. With reference to this a speech which he delivered in the Italian Parliament whilst still an ordinary member is significant. The most important passage in it reads as follows: "I hereby state that Rome, the Latin and Imperial inheritance, has today placed itself under the Catholic Church. For if it is true, as Mommsen said twenty-five or thirty years ago, that one cannot be in Rome without feeling drawn to universalism, then I say that the only universal spirit which exists in Rome today is that which emanates from the Vatican."

There are strong contrasts here also. While Fascism has brought about religious freedom, National Socialism in Germany has destroyed it; for the enforced peacefulness which reigns today cannot really be called freedom, neither can it be considered as an agreement between the opposing religious parties which have existed in Germany since the Reformation. It has already been indicated in another part of this book that the treatment of the Church shows very clearly how much can be disguised in Christian phrases: and that it was not its ruling position which led those in power to their opposition to the Church, but the quite small and mean fear of the avenging powers of a large number of believers.

Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy once said in reference to the Raváist book that the deification of the State was atheism, and that he who spoke of *Civitas Dei* should

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know that it, whether purely racial or national, or whether international, was but a mere faction ceremonially conducted. This agrees with what we said about the lack of goodwill and of humility, which distinguishes the National Socialist leaders; and if we read further in the same book (*Der Staat als sittliches Wesen; The State as a Moral Force*), in the "Archives of Law and Philosophy", vol. 9, pp. 29 ff.), we see that the Fascist State, which has learned to humble itself, is no longer to be counted as of their company; though of that company is every movement that has been set on foot by an ideal, so long as it be a State which may be taken in all seriousness, and be not merely the cloak for the power and self-interest of its leader.

"For this reason," says Mendelssohn Bartholdy, "this State must fight against everything which can, besides itself, affect the opinions of the people, and by fixed habits of thought turn them away from 'Nationalism', and it is for this reason, rather than for any idea of rivalry in social spheres, that it is true that the State cannot agree with the Church. . . . In the place of religious beliefs are 'National beliefs' . . . the State is the religion of the people, and since they themselves in their nationhood form the State, they have brought about the purest self-deification."

It is very sad to see how National Socialism has succeeded in achieving only the outward forms, even of its most cherished ambitions, while it has referred all the problems with which it has been faced to those very tenets which Fascism has long ago rejected as prejudicial and inapplicable.

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It is of course true that the administration of its government calls to mind that of Italy. There were first of all two statutes which laid the foundation of the established authority.

By the statute of 24 December, 1925, (*Attribuzioni e prerogative del Capo del Governo; Privileges and Prerogatives of the Head of the Government*) the formation of Government was made independent of Parliament, and the absolute power to decree the formation of the Cabinet, the work of the Chamber and its legislative activities, was granted to the head of the Government; and through the statute of 31 January, 1926, (*Legge sulla facoltà del potere esecutivo di emanare norme giuridiche; Law on the Right of the Executive Power to issue laws*), the Government was authorized to proclaim mandates which were in themselves legally sanctioned.

These sanctions struck a blow at and almost entirely abolished the principle of the division of power and of the precedence of the legislative body over the executive body.

The statute, granting power, which the Reichstag drew up in March 1933, granted exactly similar powers to the Hitler Government.

There is, however, a big difference to be taken into account, and this is in reference to the heads of the State.

Contrary to the opinion generally held, the throne of Italy is as much looked up to by the people now as ever. The King also is honoured and respected in those circles which are not entirely in accord with the Fascist régime, and who see always in his sover-

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eignty the enduring guarantee of law and order—that which remains amidst the change of human governments.

Only he can deny this who no longer feels the force of all that is implied in the phrase: “King by the Grace of God.”

All the causes, so well known to us, of the strength of Fascism may be stated thus: All decrees of the Italian Government differ essentially from those of the Germany of Hitler because they are given in the name of the King. In spite of a far greater impulse, Fascism never got away from this central point, and Mussolini was too wise to force it. Hindenburg, on the other hand, in the “Statute granting power”, expressly gave up all claim to his most inviolable right, that of drawing up and of proclaiming laws.

The laws, now, of the German National Government are proclaimed, not in the name of him who received his office from the Nation, but in the name only of men who, at best, even today represent nothing but a party.

The Fascist State has placed entire power in the hands of the head of the Government—a Government which reaches to the farthest village and which also appoints to the meanest office. No newspaper, no club, no society, no school is possible without the sanction of the head of the Government: and in our essay on Fascism we have tried to show that the dislocation of the individual life of the land and its people would in the long run prove fatal to the life of the nation. Today, however, we must agree that with

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Mussolini that rare condition actually exists, in which one man can keep the balance of power and can rule millions: and we can see ourselves, in similar circumstances, as a democracy, following the footsteps of such a leader.

The National Socialist State, on the other hand, which speaks so much of leadership, has really not achieved it at all. Outstanding men such as Goering, Goebbels and Roehm can never be compared with Grandi or Balbo. The former are real rivals and opponents of and candidates to succeed Hitler; the latter are mere helpers and followers.

Hitler himself so expressed it in 1933:

“What our opponents say—that a Dictator rules in our party—is not true. We have ten thousand dictators.” Well—he should certainly know best, and this is exactly what should be most firmly insisted on. Fascism has actually brought about the unity which in 1870 could not be realized. National Socialism, on the other hand, has most severely endangered German unity. What appeared to be centralization has in reality re-established the pre-Napoleonic conditions of the Twelve States, with this difference, that today they bear the names of “Stormtroops” and “Hitler’s Bodyguard”, or of newly formed competitors.

The reason for this lies as much in the insufficiency of its leader and of his tenets as in the fact that a centralized government cannot be forced on the German nation, as the leaders of the National Socialist German Working Men’s Party wished to force it. Outwardly perhaps it may be brought about, but

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inwardly it will lead to a far greater rupture than there was last year in all the small States. This is most remarkable in the laws concerning governors of the Reich, which at first sight could win serious opponents to National Socialism, and must lead to the often-expressed opinion that National Socialism has at least brought about a strict organization of the united German State. The laws of the governors of the Reich, far from leading to a unified administration, as they have done in Fascism, show today almost the contrary effect. It has been agreed—to the greatest despair of the National Socialist Reich Government—that never before has the opposition of the German free States been as strongly felt as today, and that they have never before so entirely followed their own particular ways. Not, of course, by means of a force which is sound and needs to be ordered only in its manner of working, which is of races and of principles, but under the direction of incompetent satraps and through the working out of the rule that glass cracks if it is tempered to the point of brittleness.

Since, however, Fascism has achieved through its laws the complete concord of all governing bodies in town and country, of the mayors and councils and of all else which ensures the power of the central government at Rome, and as Mussolini has thus so far succeeded in raising the actual power of his country in Western politics that he has formed it into a clearly conceived factor, so shall we in Germany be able to notice a progressive solution of the administration of the State. Only through the innate capacity and

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the functioning of the old Civil Service can National Socialism carry out its experiments.

Mussolini also has broken up all opposition parties and organizations and has turned them out from the State; but he took his time over it, for he felt himself strong enough to spend several years on the task. On the other side, National Socialism has "beaten its enemies to death with sticks", and it is mistaken if it imagines that this haste is the sign of any clever statecraft or principle. It was no more than an attempt immediately to preclude the possibility of criticism, and to make the world believe that a uniformity both of thought and feeling had been achieved. The closest confederates, such as the German Nationalists (*Deutschnationalen*), which in particular had first helped National Socialism to power, were for this reason, though ever so slightly, treated with indulgence. For it is certainly true that loyalty and honesty are generally considered superfluous in the political game. But in spite of this opinion there may be certain limits of decency and honesty which it is not advisable to overstep. We shall now see how this is borne out in fact.

The signs of weakness in National Socialism, manifested in the immediate destruction of all other organizations, the destruction of which serves also at the same time as a "show" for the curious crowd, become more distinct when compared with the regulation of other political parties.

It is true that Fascism also has political prisons and that whoever is on the island of Lipari is in comfort-

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less exile. But the people's prisons and the concentration camps of National Socialism are unknown in it. Instead of subduing its enemies it has imprisoned them, and therefore imagines that it has finished with them.

We are also aware that the methods with which Fascism directly attacked its enemies were not of the most humane; yet its deeds of violence have never reached the level which those of National Socialism reach every day with ease. It lacks the cold, calculating and almost scientific cruelty which is presented by the picture of the once desirable quality of German thoroughness; it lacks the hypocritical change under the cloak of a moral revival; it lacks the tortures prescribed by the honourable men whose guide is the *Gartenlaube* (a German nationalistic family weekly).

It lacks above all things the wholesale dishonouring of youth in the prison atmosphere of National Socialist service, which degrades them to the ranks of paid slaves who do not even receive their pay. Of course, this may be due to the fact that German capitalism has always been the most aggressive because it has felt itself the most secure. Its representatives liked to be admired as good patriots, while at the same time they were never too particular about their private business with the French or another "enemy"; they spoke of German pride and gratefully accepted the Cross of the Legion of Honour, such as Krupp wore, and when they could sell barbed wire and grenade lighters to the enemy they quietly did it. The final agreement was drawn up by the Scherl publishing



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house and by all those who published for the dear people tracts in which these capitalists were held up to the young as models of patriotism. Why should those who are so well versed in its instincts not also support the "Socialist" Hitler movement?

Of Fascism, on the other hand, it may be said that it at least tries, in the ordering of its work, to bring about a certain agreement in the interests of the classes, and, what is more, since its coming into power—and even before then—it has no longer maintained that it is socialistic. Nor has it ever used in its political propaganda the crude method of rousing anti-Semitic feeling. Young, Stringer and many others of Mussolini's collaborators are Jews, and whether the former Secretary General to the party, Turatti, or Balbo, De Bianchi, etc., be Jews or not is immaterial. They may be—and the fact that this is so would in no way prejudice their standing. Herein have we already very important differences.

In the chapter dealing with the Jews we were able to say that without anti-Semitism National Socialism would probably not have come into power, for only through the diversion of the public interest from the real causes of the crisis was it won for the swastika.

Fascism could very easily have used it, and it would perhaps have been greatly to its advantage to do so, for its immediate predecessors in the government, De Facta and Schanzer, were Jews: whereas, with the exception of Hilferding, who gave up office as long ago as 1930, no Jew has held office in the Reich since the assassination of Walter Rathenau. But it did

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not think it necessary to have recourse to this meanest of all methods, feeling itself already strong enough.

It was not hedged in by trifling interests, as is National Socialism the whole time, and so it was able to maintain in foreign politics a constant and peaceful policy, of honourable purport. That of National Socialism on the other hand vacillates between the lowest cringing and the begging for friendly relations, laughable warcries and little trivialities, which serve it in no way, but yet rouse the mistrust of the whole world.

I think that Mussolini must really be much amused by the visits of National Socialist leaders. It is surely a wonderful experience for him to be faced with people who, at the best, are the apes of his own ideas. And that Goering should have recalled Prince Philip of Hesse from Rome must certainly have amused him the most.

In my first political essay, which appeared on 14 July, 1930, in the *Vossische Zeitung*, under the title of *Das dritte Reich* ("The Third Reich"), I have already dealt with similar points. There the question was put, as to what National Socialism and Fascism really had in common, and I came to the conclusion that National Socialism chiefly consisted of crudely copied external features of Fascism and I felt as certain then as I do today that Fascism in Italy could endure without endangering the life of the nation, while National Socialism would soon lead to a perceptible disturbance of the whole of Europe. This is now at last appreciated. National Socialism

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means a constant danger of war, for in the long run the policy of issuing at home invidious bulletins about the other Powers, while spreading abroad pacifying assurances, can lead only to suspicion and misunderstanding. Perhaps the Austrian question will decide the final result.

National Socialism will here reckon in vain on the support of Italy, for Mussolini knows only too well that the raising of the right hand does not yet afford sufficient guarantee for the union of independent interests. In this connection it can also be pointed out that this superficiality has reached in Germany a degree of absurdity and of terror which is unintelligible in Italy.

Never has it occurred to Mussolini to raise the Roman salute to the status of a compulsory form of greeting, or to impose anything that would correspond to the words "Heil Hitler". It is the vanity of the real bourgeois parvenu and of a man who still sits at a Munich beer table and still says, "If I were first Chancellor!", just as there are countless Muelers, Meiers, Hinterhubers and Schulzes who are given to saying, "If I had a share in the Government!"

I certainly believe that one day the story will be told of how this Hitler was never really a chancellor, but that he was considered as one only by accident, just as the captain of Koepenick was not really a captain at all, but only played the part of one, and played it most certainly with more conviction than Hitler plays his part. The deification of his person,

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the house altars with his picture, all of which in loathsomeness compares with the fetishism of the most primitive tribes, and all the other points about which Molière would have written a play—*Le petit-bourgeois-chancelier*—is inconceivable in Italy.

One may see the picture of Mussolini everywhere, but it is without accessories and it is effective in itself. Would it occur to Mussolini, let us say, to plant Mussolini-pines and to change the name of Piazza Venezia to Piazza Benito Mussolini? Or is it thinkable that in Italy girls would be christened by the name of "Mussolina", even though this sounds much better than "Hitlerike"? All this tawdriness, these compulsory demonstrations of popularity, these little things and large things lacking in taste, even to the order that the Christ at Oberammergau should wear a swastika on his coat—as though the David of Michelangelo should have to hold a faggot in his hand! And there is another point: by nothing can the intellectual methods of Fascism and of National Socialism be better distinguished than in their respective ideas of humour.

It is said that many of the witticisms about Mussolini originate with himself, and it is true that even the best Fascists are able to enjoy good criticism and even the most severe hits, as long as they are to the point. National Socialism, however, has the greatest (even imaginable) lack of humour, and it will never even in the smallest whisper admit that it can ever possibly savour of the comic—above all it will never notice how comic it is in its lack of humour. Lack of

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irony about oneself is always a sign of weakness, and of the constraint of a servant who has suddenly become master. Suspiciously he watches to see whether the other man is noticing how he behaves himself at table, while if the other does not happen to eat peas with his knife he takes it as a personal insult.

So in all spheres one can see how great are the differences which distinguish National Socialism from even Fascism, by which it once expected to be called to account for the amount of its propaganda which it had adopted. There is, south of the Alps, a movement to which even its opponents cannot refuse an acknowledgement of success; in the north an administration which had to let everything which its predecessors had achieved go to rack and ruin: in Fascism a high endeavour to further art and science; in National Socialism the deposition and exiling of all scientists, artists and writers who do not feel it their task to extol the National Socialist smugness: in Italy a great man of knowledge, ability and exact policy; in Germany, Adolf Hitler. There is in Italy the furthering and the beginning of historic tasks; in Germany the comic-operatic combination of a sergeant-major and a Sunday school. What severs National Socialism from the rest of Europe, the outward forms of which it in no way resembles, and what severs it from Germany, so that, as Goebbels said, "it has swallowed itself"?

Everything.

## *Chapter XIV*

### Nation and Justice

**M**ore than once we have tried to explain in the course of this book how, along with the social, it was above all the national problem which in post-war Germany stood in the centre of all that happened. Every group and every order of the people had to come to a decision about this. And whoever forgot it, even for a moment, knew after a glance at the map, which the treaty of Versailles had created, that he too must decide independently of his own wishes. But it would be a mistake to believe that this one vital interest, of equal importance to all, had created a unifying strength. On the contrary, it was the national question which divided the people into different parties, all violently fighting each other.

The cause of their quarrel, however, lay not so much in fundamental differences of opinion, as in queer distortions of the points of view, which made each opponent take the other's side, instead of his own. All Germany had become a tug of war of various groups, where the A side of the rope was tugged by group B, and the B side by group A. Nobody, therefore, who represented a point of view, was

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quite certain about it—or at least he felt uneasily that he had no absolute right to be its exponent.

None of the specialists, no representative of a party could ever feel that he was absolutely in the right, because he only discredited the views of his opponent from the mere fact that he was an opponent. Not that we ourselves should wish, out of a general and fallacious feeling of brotherhood, to counsel compromise! We know very well that post-war Germany necessitated clear standpoints and that nothing would be more misleading—or even untrue—than to pronounce with an ingratiating smile some empty phrase to the effect that the others also were God's creatures and honest men. What I want to express is, that the views of all were beside the mark, because they lacked a common will and a common purpose. They tugged different ways, and so they became a series of gigantic frauds, because their deeds did not correspond to their words, or their words to their deeds. There was nobody who had a courage of his own, or who was prepared to follow what he thought was his opinion to its ultimate consequences.

We do not wonder at this, when we remember a phrase of Stefan George, in which he speaks of "fresh reconstruction with the ancient sins". Germany after the War had changed entirely, for it was indeed impossible that such great human sacrifices should have been made by and for a country without leaving their traces; and whosoever does not understand this—those who talked most of it, understood it least—will draw false conclusions everywhere.

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The fatal error of all modern politicians is that they believe in general rules, and assume that some year or other—in Germany it was 1913—might be taken as a normal starting point, and make all acts, standards and methods fit in to this.

Politics, and especially those which are to serve the national idea, are in constant flow. They are as much alive as the people itself, in whom constantly death and birth are interchanging. Therefore everything which overlooks this fact is wrong, because it is petrified. For Germany these rules hold, even more than for other countries; and so to break them must, in a few years, inescapably lead to disaster. Still less than in other countries can a national cliché be used for, as a most vital organism, it always was “the universal Reich”; and so also in periods when other countries contented themselves, spiritually and geographically, with a well-defined State.

Here then is the starting point to the solution of the nationality question of Germany, and it was not recognized by a single one of those who wrangled perpetually with their opponents as to which of them was the best patriot. The most orthodox—however strange this may seem—were the Social Democrats, and they were so overwhelmingly “patriotic” that of all international collaboration there was hardly anything left.

None of them, however, dared speak about that, for, partly from a complete misunderstanding of their adherents, and partly from fear of their friends abroad, they put up, after the unjust peace treaty,



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with the most ominous reproach of being un-German, and many of their verdicts bore an aspect of having been uttered only to give satisfaction to their enemies. It was, in reality, therefore chiefly their fault when the Right, which had failed so piteously in 1918, could so soon pretend again to be the sole representative of the national idea, and when the monstrous interpretation was accepted, by which they were allowed to brand with high treason all other parties fighting for Germany and making the greatest sacrifices of whatever they possessed, very often of their own leaders. Still more inconceivable it is that all who were stigmatized in this way somehow, in the end, began to believe it themselves, and that therefore they did everything in their power to persuade the public to let them appear as consummate chauvinists.

Only in this way can it be explained that the Prussian Coalition tolerated the Stahlhelm parades in Coblenz and Breslau, and in connection with that the most ferocious threats of war against France and Poland. Nothing was done to silence the worst utterances of all hurrah-shouting patriotism or the most demagogic yells for a forcible revision of the treaties; and as no report ever reached us that all the bellicose secondary schoolteachers, who educated their pupils in a spirit of hatred, were ordered to subside, we cannot wonder that the German left wing also gradually became suspect of nourishing the thought of vengeance—which was very bad indeed for Germany.

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For what else could people think, when it came to their notice that Severing himself guaranteed the reconstruction of the regiments for the "Eastern border protection"? That these regiments were not really intended "for protection", everybody knew, whatever trouble the courts of justice of the Reich might take to silence all rumours. It was an open secret that they were meant to fight against the Republic which had taken them so benignly under her wing, and that beyond this there was other work, no less aggressive, to be done, the danger of which has certainly not diminished today.

The Left lacked courage to pledge themselves to a peaceful standpoint of their own; and if we bear in mind with what apologetic commentaries they handed Locarno and Geneva over to the German people we need not wonder at anything. The whole thing became absolutely unbearable in the sequel, for the same leaders who, cuffed and humiliated, followed the men they had overthrown in 1918, and never could desist from repeating how "national" they were, published in their Press the most trashy articles on humanity: as if the Left considered every German soldier a peacebreaker, but every French one a guarantee for universal European understanding. Out of ill-conceived universal brotherhood they identified themselves with all varieties and specimens—good and bad alike—of academic Pacifism, as we tried to show at the beginning of this book.

How shall we therefore summarize our judgement of the Left? Instead of many words which might sug-

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gest themselves, let the inscription on their tombstone be: "They lived and died without dignity". Neither inwardly nor outwardly did they stand for anything, and an opposition of any real significance would have overthrown them at least seven years earlier.

And what of the Right in Germany? The word "national" was its signboard and its professional trademark; and nowadays, after it has attained undisputed authority, there is hardly anything which can do without the adjective "national", if it wants to maintain itself—even unto the oil, which the Shell company provides. . . . If this idolatrizing of the national had been honest, one could at least respect it, however much one had to fight against it; but even honesty and faith in their own good cause must be denied to the leaders of the Right; and, however unpleasant it may be to face a lunatic, it is better to do that than to encounter one who only simulates madness in order to persuade the credulous populace, if he can, that he is in an inspired and mystic trance.

All the world knows that every step taken to revise the peace treaties met with even more violent opposition from the Right than from Poincaré and the French Staff. For everything the Republican governments achieved, in the way of alleviating the social and national destitution, robbed the Right of their most prevailing means of agitation; and this was the only thing they had in view: the attainment of power—not the real welfare of the nation. We see therefore that the Right always stabbed the Government in the back, when difficult external political transactions

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were under discussion, as for example when Hugenberg obviously committed high treason in his letters to America, trying to undermine the political and economic credit of the Republic. At the same time, when at home the deliverance from all treaties and debts was offered to the people as the most powerful decoy, Hitler and the German Nationalists sent their envoys to the Foreign Powers, to offer them all possible guarantees that they would hold the same political course that Walter Rathenau had begun, and that Stresemann had continued.

The volume of the lies that were told is too enormous to be grasped by the brain of any single person; and one is ashamed of all who thus cheapened the German name with so much that was contemptible. There never was a greater German abeyance of dignity than with the "National Right" in Germany. No Republican would ever have had to surrender as the Hitler Government has done at the signing of the Treaty of the Four Powers; and if one compares his famous speeches for peace or his love-making to Poland (for which Stresemann or Brüning would have been assassinated) with that to which he had previously pledged himself, then anger and revolt raise their heads against the political swindle and all those who seek to benefit by it, who, of set purpose, and with full knowledge of the facts, deceive the German people—and, as a German, one is also ashamed of one's own people, that it was so immature as to be fooled by such coarse methods.

Down to the smallest details it can be traced how

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the Right, in certain well-known concrete cases, and outside the limits of party politics, has deliberately injured the national interests. We need only be reminded of the plebiscite, which they let loose against the Young Plan. Everybody knew that this in no way furnished the final solution; but it had to be accepted if they wished to pave the way for complete deliverance. When contemplating the various sections which had been covered since Versailles, one might be certain that the Young Plan, too, would only be an episode—just as this had already superseded the Dawes Plan, which contained much more oppressive regulations. . . .

The lighter fetters of the Young Plan therefore had to be borne, though the fact was not overlooked that they were fetters indeed—as some prisoner who is taken out of a dungeon may greet the milder confinement to which he is led, in spite of the fact that he does not go gladly and of his own accord. He accepts it, as it means at least a step to freedom. There is no doubt that the Right also has realized these things; but it would have been a contradiction of their entire tactics to have renounced in the interests of the nation the opportunities for political agitation with which the situation had presented them. They could do it easily, for they risked nothing for themselves—only a great deal for the people.

They knew that the plebiscite would be a failure, and that therefore they would not be in a position to be responsible for foreign policy; and so with utmost pathos they could beat their demonstrative drums

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and strike theatrical attitudes as saviours of the German nation. The result was that all those who were willing, for the above-mentioned reasons, to accept the Young Plan, were now suddenly forced to make a positive confession before all the world; for it was necessary to oppose the plebiscite of the Right by all possible means of propaganda, if the utmost disaster were to be prevented from breaking out over Germany once more.

It is needless to elaborate further details, since everyone who has his eyes open can see them. We have therefore tried not to deal so much with what is evident, as to investigate the invisible ideas by which the visible things are informed. Seen from this angle, it is not to be wondered at that the Left as well as the Right went astray. The latter still more fatally, as through them millions of people were infected with ideas, the untruthfulness of which was perfectly well known to them. I have already alluded to the fact that the word "national" in the German sense must not be understood in a narrowly limited way, and that nothing could be further from truth than to apply the conception of the Western States as to union to Germany. If one puffs oneself up and proclaims loudly—and in execrable taste—"We Germans have so many advantages over other people", then one must not imitate the undesirable features of those "other people" on the absence of which our difference from them depends.

"German nation" is a conception of destiny and of a sacred mission, not of race or of dictatorial sway.

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“German Nation” or “German Reich” is the name of the actual inhabitants of German territory together with the appropriate political construction which forms the receptacle of universal Occidental thought. How great is this conception, and how far does it rise above everything that is praised by the National Socialists as “German” and “Germany”!

Perhaps they really believe that they are exceptionally bold, and that the resounding phrases used by them of Germany’s greatness and significance have never been uttered before. They may even conceive of themselves as heaven-assailing Titans carrying the German name all over the world and penetrating the innermost recesses of history. Yet in reality they are so modest, so small, so unpretentious! They hide themselves timidly within their territorial boundaries, they put up with all and everything, so only they may be allowed to remain in power. “From the Meuse unto the Memel”—for of the Adige they no longer dare to speak! Never before was Germany so much on the outside of all that is happening in the world as it is today; and yet its vocation ensures that it is still a factor which counts.

Everything that the Nazis say and do proves that they have not the slightest perception of Germany’s mission—“Super-Prussia”, as Goering called it, seemed to them the highest fulfilment; and so they believe that to go back to Frederick the Great of Prussia would give them the necessary authorization for what they are doing now.

In Potsdam accordingly in his name and at his

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grave was baptized the Third Reich, and Adolf Hitler it was who performed the ceremony, though in reality he has nothing whatever to do with Prussia. His proper sphere of action should have been the Austro-Czechoslovakian; but as he felt himself inferior to Prussianism, he wanted, in a rather high jump, to take the obstacles that separated him from the Junkers between Elbe and Oder. That he was allowed to direct his steps to the tomb of Frederick the Great may therefore have seemed to him a final acknowledgement of his German leadership—and that is entirely characteristic of the situation.

We do not blame him for seeking historical justifications and analogies—for who would not do that? Nor because he has the presumption to consider himself the equal of Frederick the Great, who in his epoch was an eminent statesman—but because he does not realize that this Frederick has nothing whatever to give to the true leaders of the German future. If Hitler were what he pretends to be, the thought would never have occurred to him to revert for the foundation of his State to a symbol that for Germany is utterly dead; or if it was not he himself who arranged the myth of Fridericius Rex for the German future, it only shows all the more clearly how his environment stamps its seal on him, and that it is not he himself who is the real leader.

If it were indeed true that the Third Reich is fulfilling a development of centuries, and that it encompasses all that former periods have been striving after in vain, then of necessity it should have dared



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to go even further back into history; but as in truth Germany of the present day is in no way an expression of all the dreams and hopes of those who in earlier epochs longed for the coming Reich, events could not take a different course. The best way back to Frederick the Great for the National Socialists was in a memory of the three last decades of the nineteenth century, during which Prussia externally represented the greatness of the whole country. It was a greatness which of necessity had to break down, for it was in contradiction to the historical sanctions of the people.

We are unwilling to use cheap phrases about "l'Esprit prussien", and we know perfectly well that many, who condemn this "Esprit", and the ideas contained in it, have not grasped what is good in it—the standing up for law and order—and that therefore they hate and distrust it. There are others, too, who wrap up their animosity towards Germany in such statements as that they "are not against Germany, but against Prussia". Therefore all who nowadays live outside the German frontiers should specially beware of such a point of view, as this might lead to a complete change of attitude, since nobody cares to have dealings with those who for some obscure political reason are prepared to betray their own country.

All the more necessary therefore does it seem to speak here of the true image which the inner-German problem presents. A "Prussia", as so often the word is glibly used, does not exist at all: in proof

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whereof one might instance the external differences between, let us say, the "Prussian" inhabitants of the Rhineland, and those of Berlin or Königsberg. Prussia as an entity can at the most only be used as an expression for a territory geographically determined, but not for the mental atmosphere shared by all the forty millions of people within a State.

What the world means by "Prussia", using the word in a hostile sense, and what the National Socialists mean, speaking of the object of their worship, are two entirely different things; but by "Prussianism" we may understand the characteristic qualities of a race that for some centuries wielded power—as we have described it in Chapter XII—including a strong sense of duty on the part of the lower nobility and men of property, though without any clear understanding of the idea underlying it, combined with a feeling of superiority towards Slavic and half-German inferiors, and the same thing reflected, in the lower military ranks, lower and middle officials and academicians, who would be glad enough to climb out of their own class and to reach the class above them. This Prussianism, a blend of the arrogance of the landowners with its reflected imitation from below, had been to a great degree overcome, though now once more it has again become the standard accepted everywhere.

With Hitler's coming into power the democratic development of Germany came abruptly to an end, while what had seemed to be done with, and rightly done with because it was unsocial, cold, fossilized and

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sterile, without any grasp of universal conceptions, narrowly limited according to clans and territory, again raised its banner. "Prussia" was proclaimed as ideal, goal and ulterior meaning of the Prussian as well as of the South-German sphere, and this with an intensity typical of this lower stratum of Prussianism of which we spoke. For Potsdam, rejectable as it is, is a thousand times better than those who are infinitely below and who in this caste see the unattainable ideal of their yearnings. Therefore nobody, who had any insight into the real purport and mission of Germany, would ever accept it in its present provincial rigidity, or even endure it in its present centralization which is the deathblow to the life of its several tribes. The inner-German conception of the State, as the Prussian Junkers had created it, may have been right at a certain time for part of the territory. But it is fatal, when at the present time it is expanded into a norm for the whole.

Germany as bearer of the Reich, of which the National Socialists know nothing, has to be universal in itself, before it will be able to expand spiritually to the Occidental Realm. Recent utterances, as for example that the goal of the Third Reich is not the state of its 65 millions, must not erroneously lead us to the conclusion that its leaders understood anything of this. For to pursue a policy of conquests and to search for foreign laurels with which they hope to conceal the inner festering wounds, has nothing whatever to do with the aim of real Germany. And even should the Nazis succeed in conquering all Europe, they

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would not be universal. For everywhere they would erect a fossil governing power, not a community of living units bound together by the consciousness of a common mission as decreed by destiny and cult.

That is why every effort must be made to maintain Austria's independence. For only as long as it remains free from Nazi overlordship, is there a certain hope for the future of the entire Reich; and so here, too, becomes evident how anti-national National Socialism is in its effects, for it is altogether beyond dispute that Austria belongs to the confederacy of all German tribes. Without the overthrow of the democratic State perhaps the hour to prove this would have come soon; but now all those who most passionately stand for the greater Germany have to fight against the union of Austria and the Third Reich.

And thereby they easily may be mistaken for those who are in league with all who wish for a weakened Germany. Only the overthrow of the Hitler super-Prussia will again disentangle the situation; for, from that moment on, the several fronts will be more definite and comprehensible. The coming righteous Reich that has to unite all Germanic tribes, if destiny shall not be cheated of its most far-reaching plan, will not be an isolated block among the other European nations, as the Third Reich is, nor will it stop at its most recent past, which for us is its remotest. It will bear itself with all the claims of true historical conditionality, but at the same time it will show that courage which Hitler could not have, and which out of its inmost being is the condition for the future: to

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link up with what for the last time became manifest in the person of Frederick the Second, the Roman-German universal Emperor. Not little Potsdam, and in the church of its garrison the sarcophagi that are still too great for Adolf Hitler, will be beginning and consecration; but Palermo and the cathedrals of Magdeburg, Bamberg and Speyer.

The right interpretation of the national conception of Germany is conclusive for everything else, as the formations of all departments of justice are depending on this. Small wonder therefore that with this present Germany, which is infinitely far away from its fulfilment, a complete anarchy of justice has set in. For the springs of all justice are hidden in an understanding of historical development and the future of the nation. Who does not see this, must err in everything. Taken from this point of view many things become obvious, which seemed incomprehensible in the beginning. In the first time after the Nazi revolution one could hear everywhere, "They cannot do that!" "It goes against every written and unwritten law!" It took some weeks before people realized that such protestations are useless, as they are based on premises which are absolutely wrong. For justice after all is not something that can be "made", but is dependent on that which is the basis of a national entity. Merely to refresh our memory, and that only, because the Nazis always robe themselves in the cloak of legality, we will here record the most essential facts which went counter to justice as it was then existent.

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As a first instance should be mentioned the ordinance by which President von Hindenburg, contrary to his oath, surrendered the black-red-gold banner to the Hakenkreuz. This is of great importance in so far as he thereby has broken his oath on the constitution, where it was most visible to all. A similar breach of the constitution, for which Hindenburg is responsible, is that the Communists were bereft of their representation in Parliament, and that in March 1933 a Reichstag was devised, which was a public mockery of the well-defined regulations of the Weimar constitution. In the same way the measures against the Jews and against unpopular judges were contrary to it: to sanction, or at least to tolerate them, brands Hindenburg in the same way as a breaker of the constitution, and showed those to be right who always warned us against too much faith in his impeccable righteousness.

But everything that is happening now, even compulsory sterilization, the concentration camps, the extraordinary measures against the 'Marxists', and so on, is formally sanctioned by the new legislative bodies of the Third Reich. "Formal", however, does not mean an ethical but only an outward justification.

Only outwardly, every successful revolution—even when its success was attained by stealth and not in open battle—creates a new code of justice, the "normative power of the factic", as the Reichs court of justice once called it, founds a new ordinance, a new legitimacy. If therefore the National Socialistic State

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were justified as such, it could not be blamed for trying to put its views into practice; and it would be inadmissible to confront it with the judicial interpretations of other countries which are based on other premises.

In any case it is not enough only to emphasize its barbarities, for, if it is not overthrown before, it will go on committing them until the original leaders are compelled to defend themselves against their adherents pushing from behind. Therefore the only important thing is to make an end to National Socialism as soon as possible; and perhaps the reducing of it to nought may contribute to that.

It is evident, therefore, that the Third Reich, which was called into being by the naked will to power, can only create power—never lasting justice; and so, too, it can only be overthrown by power, by a power that will destroy the hypnotic influence by means of which it has enthralled large sections of the people. This sentence has to be taken literally, for it was an evil spell that was cast on the German people. Otherwise it would remain inexplicable that also those theses of justice which are unalterable, and therefore beyond the interpretation of a national community, no longer have any significance for them. For when the State, according to our conception, has an absolute sovereignty over the single individual and his associations, it is very limited in its power over "justice". To explain to the people what this justice is, no jurisprudential definitions are wanted, for every human being understands its

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validity. So the following thesis appears to us part of the unalterable:

The right of man to life, health and freedom, so far as the similar rights of all are not in opposition to his own.

Further: the right to freedom of religion and conscience and—the axiom of all Western communities—on a national basis, with the collaboration of all sections of the people, to work for the European Confederacy. This means: an ordinance which should suspend the national corporations in favour of a horizontal sovereignty, dependent on class distinction, or surrender the power of the State to a single group of leaders, or to one single person who would not bear any responsibility towards the people as a whole—would thereby infringe on the primary law of Western interpretation of justice, which demands that all citizens participate in the rights of an entire nation, on the basis of a community as founded on common mission and destiny—not on race or on class. Already by intuition every Western mind feels the immorality of another train of thought, and defends himself against it as if he were himself endangered.

On the same level with these unalterable laws lies the duty of all European communities to avenge every crime, by or against whomsoever it may have been committed. Implied in this is, that an act, objectively bad, is not changed into one that is good, when it is destined to serve the interests of all. Perhaps this will be the most eminent task of our coming



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epoch—that it shall no longer be allowed to live on injustice and blood.

In this respect allusions, and endeavours to secure justification by reference to historical events, are inadmissible. The continuous chain of historical development and repetition is interrupted here, as the twentieth century has to take a factor into account that was alien to former periods. The present stage of human mentality quite excludes everything which savours of the theory that the means are justified by the end. Deeds effected by countries, which go against these primal conceptions, are null and void; and to violate them affects all, not only the country on the territory of which the infraction occurs. Those norms moreover, which we should not consider absolutely unalterable, can only be modified by the State so far as the significance of the people and its mission within European civilization are not affected thereby. A violation of these well-defined limits therefore gives to every member of the people the right and even the duty to oppose it.

According to our view there will be no necessity for a violent revolt and, what is more, we are convinced that this will not be needed. It would be sufficient if at first a few, later on more are found, by whom the violators of justice spiritually are called to order and put before an inner Court. All modern constitutions more or less understand this. The Weimar constitution, for example, had made the Reichs-president the Lord Keeper of the Justice of the Reich. In a former article, in which we compared

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the structure of Italian Fascism to German justice, we instanced the case, merely theoretical at that time, of what would happen if also the president of the Reich should fail; and we came to the same conclusion that we have now formulated. Therefore all opposition against the present autocracy in Germany is justified, and for each man as long as he lives, both before history and before his own people, it is his absolute and bounden duty "neither to do injustice nor to suffer it".

Germany is the receptacle in which these impulses, that are introducing something entirely new in the course of history, have to be realized for the first time. A German statesman, who acts contrarily to this, is therefore antinational and detrimental to his people; for he lowers Germany to the rank of a robber state, for which in present-day Europe there is no longer any room.

The mere mention of these matters should carry persuasion with it, and whoever misunderstands their meaning will be apt to misunderstand everything. Especially will this be true of those who would cling to superannuated methods, or who forget that a living sense of responsibility should be the test of all rulership. Besides such a sense, moreover, there is needed a keenness of perception and understanding such as could perhaps be looked for only in those classes of the community which for a thousand years have been more vigilant than their brethren, whose experience reaches back no more than a decade or so.

If we have alluded to Hitler's going back to Prus-

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sian kingship with the modesty of bad conscience and spiritual impotence, which he wants to present as a Titanic scaling on high, perhaps the motives for our judgement have become clearer. This Prussian kingdom was a splinter of the universal German Kaiser-Reich; moreover, it was a wicked and rebellious one. And if at that time the Imperial State was very far removed from its original greatness, especially as under the House of Habsburg it had by itself shrunk down to territorial borders and limitations, in its conception it was still the all-embracing European edifice. The Prussian kings were too new to dare stretch their hands after the Imperial crown, and perhaps because of feeling their inferiority they did battle against it. It is significant, indeed, that the Third Reich begins here. . . .

But not everything is universal which calls itself so. We expressed this before, when we spoke of the projected conquests of National Socialism, and we should find it again, strengthened, if Adolf Hitler should try to place the Imperial crown (after the death of Hindenburg perhaps) on his own head. But though it would mean nothing, though crowned with it he would remain the same small bourgeois he always was, still it would be such a terrible misuse of highest symbolism that we can only hope the people may be spared this. Though Charlie Chaplin might successfully impersonate the German Emperor, the bare idea is a monstrosity.

On the other hand, who has not already thought of Philip of Hesse as a candidate to the Imperial

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Crown of the Third Reich? But it seems to be a rumour with some foundation in it, that Wilhelm II has renounced for his house the acceptance of the Imperial crown from the hands of a Hindenburg or a Hitler, and this furnishes proof that even in the House of Hohenzollern there is more sense of dignity and more understanding of what is acceptable and allowable than in those, who, at their tombs, would fain have constructed the German future.

Wherever we begin, we always end with the same verdict and, in order not to be smothered by the many details, we must try to bring still more clearly to light the fountains from which goes forth all the wrong with which we are confronted today in Germany. It can be expressed in one single sentence: they lack humility, divine grace and vocation; and so everything they take in hand must turn to wrong, even if now and then they have found the forms externally right. This idea has to be opposed to the madness of the masses: that what they call right, may perhaps be right within the rule of the Third Reich, as perchance a community of pirates may be able to give themselves laws which are useful; but that the Third Reich as such must be rejected, because it was founded by unclean methods and because therefore it stirred up all the mud that lies hidden in the masses, and that only by the purity of every single being can it be overcome. This Third Reich therefore is not Germany, but its change into the reverse, and out of this can be explained many things which I did not mention before.

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People will perhaps ask how I can write of justice, and forget the atrocities that are perpetually committed by the Nazis? I have not forgotten them, but I did not think it right to begin with them, for they were not perpetrated by individuals, even the most depraved of whom would not have been capable of committing them unless they had been members of the inhuman collective consciousness which finds expression in this movement. Not that we want to excuse the acts as such, or to deny them—for we know only too well that we are now dealing with indisputable facts.

Yes, it is true that the “brown” troops, when they felt secure, have massacred defenceless people; it is true that they have blinded and castrated, as they did with the Berlin barrister Günther Joachim, and many, many others; it is the truth that they flogged boys of 16 and 17 with steel rods, and thus made them cripples for life; and it is true also that they have ravished women, and night after night patrolled the towns and then in back rooms and W.C.s butchered human beings. And true above all things it is, that this did not happen in the beginning only, but that it is going on day after day. What do the “suicides” mean, the “shot while trying to escape”, and all the other announcements which are found nowadays even in the columns of the assimilated Press? What are we supposed to think, when we read of an “exhausting” trial of political opponents, after they have made a “full confession”? We have been informed by people, who were on trial, not before the S.A., but

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before the secret police of the State, that three writing-desks were round the prisoner, the men on the left and right hands having leather whips in their hands, with which they flogged head and face if the answer did not seem to them sufficiently clear. And the unspeakable sufferings of the tortured 80,000 in the concentration camps cry day and night towards Heaven—where is justice here, where humanity? Never, as long as the world has lasted, has God's image been defiled as now it is in Germany.

Who can understand, that with the outward forms of human beings, men should be mutilated and trodden down by their brothers; what must go on in the soul of the men who are capable of doing this? The only answer is this: It is not the man himself who wounds and murders himself in his neighbour, but a collective instinct awakened in him, stronger than his own self. It is the seven-headed beast of St. John's Revelation, that is crouching over Germany, and creating its instruments in the leaders of the Third Reich. It is drunk with the blood of the Saints; drunk with the blood of those who bear witness to the Son of Man. On its head are the names of blasphemy, and it is in league with all the powers of the unsealed abyss.

Not for isolated details the coming judgement will deal out punishment: in their totality they will be struck by the verdict of an inflexible and righteous justice. They will find nowhere to hide; no office, no usurped honours will protect them, no remorse will be of avail. And upon Hindenburg, too, when his body is in the tomb, a court of justice will decide.

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His ivory marshal's staff, the emblem of the pure and just warrior, will be broken asunder as a memento to all eternity. This doomsday has begun already and it must take its course, as verily as God is alive, for His own judgement lives in the verdicts which are given and executed here.

But now, while we take care that none of our arguments against National Socialism may be found lacking in point or weight, so that none of them may miss the target, and while we do not for a single moment doubt that we have full justification for our action, we could not derive our right to undertake the combat from single or scattered instances.

Has there ever been a more revolting spectacle than this: that in the daytime, in all publicity, at the Potsdam family ceremonies, speaker after speaker should overflow with morality, with tales of a national awakening and reconstruction of a national justice; and that in the night, in the dimness of the houses, these same men should ravage like wild beasts? And even this is not the worst of the matter, for it must be remembered that were the S.A. and S.S. men the troops of a great conqueror, though we should turn from them with human horror, yet we should accept and submit to it, as to the ravagings of some tremendous catastrophe of nature.

We should regard it as repulsive; yet, even if they are wild animals tearing the bodies of their enemies, a great and purifying spirit that cannot be defiled even by this degradation of its lowest creatures is working through them, unknown to themselves.

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But here? Where is the centre, round which the "brown" ring of sorcery is turning? It is Adolf Hitler. A man with this stature, these features, has gained supreme power, by what means we can see by its fruits. And he dares justify morally the sacrifice of one single life and of one single drop of blood? It is not possible—perhaps in reality he himself hardly knows what is happening, for he is a tool himself—perhaps those are right, who picture him as a good man, exceedingly sentimental and lachrymose, who has a good many breakdowns, a great many hysterical attacks, and who is a great, a very great, nonentity. I believe the coming judgement will not even imprison him, but leave him to the verdict of his own pettiness. For his person is of no account, and therefore his opponents should not take him seriously as a personality. We must not copy the Nazi mentality, that makes him their one and all. He is nothing else but the well-known empty space, that can be central too. In him has come together whatever there is in the German soul of deceptions, false expectations, self-seeking, ambition, cruelty, and idealism led astray.

It is out of this synthesis of understanding that we can recognize what is merely a symptom, never a fulfilment; for it is certain that in the movement there is no greatness, no saving grace, and that this is why it could find a symbol in the image and the name of Adolf Hitler.

Cowards to the very bone, the leaders have not even dared confess that in nearly all cases they had



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arranged the cruelties committed by the S.A., and that without exception they must bear the guilt because of their leadership; and because of a far greater fear than that of public opinion—because they are terribly afraid of their own followers—they have, through repeated general amnesties for all misdeeds committed from “national motives”, acknowledged their guilt in the crimes of their adherents. And so their mutilating of the ideal is worse than any mere details of their crimes.

They have dishonoured the wonderful name of the “German Nation” in such a way that millions of people have been utterly led astray; nor can they wonder that Communism is gaining ground under their feet, after they have distorted the name of Germany to a caricature that has to cover all the atrocities of oppression.

For what a terrible monster, so the masses argue, this “National Ideal” must be, in whose name they can break the limbs of fettered men, and crack their skulls with impunity.

Therefore with all of them, who do not know of the third existing possibility besides National Socialism and Communism, louder than ever echo the words which to the word “Nation”, falsified by the Hakenkreuz to a poisonous Moloch, oppose the blatant reverse:

“Then Comrades come rally; and the last fight let us face;

The International . . . unites the human race.”

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And we confess, that even we who look for salvation in the universal Reich, wherein dwells the Imperial Law of God, rather than in the materialistic ruling of the world by the Communistic State, even we feel a shudder passing through us when we hear those words.

They are hammering through all countries, their rhythm pulsates in the souls of degraded and tortured beings behind the barbed wire of the concentration camps, it beats against the prison bars, and calls out of the graves of the victims through the "brown" fog that hangs over the German cemeteries:

". . . and the last fight let us face;  
The International . . . unites the human race."

A mighty rush of sound goes through all Germany, a powerful symphony, that no decree can attain, no machine gun exterminate. Into the slumber of the leaders echoes this sound, and they set out more and more sentinels, and their speeches become louder and louder, that during the daytime they may be deceived.

Yet even in the midst of their soldiery they are trembling with fear, and so they devise ever new methods to spy even over their own myrmidons. Sometimes it seems as if they wanted to delude Providence, throw a morsel to it, that it may spare them. But it will not be deceived. Without mercy it will execute its verdict, which is already written upon the stars. They feel that, too, and therefore they are so small and abject. And so, for the moment, before every French poilu, who speaks gruffly to them, the

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government of this so-called "Reich" breaks down. East Prussia, Silesia and the Rhineland they would sacrifice only to save themselves, and in the end they will give up the whole of Germany, if they are promised a small island, where they will be safe. But this island will not be there, not on Earth, not in Heaven, not in Hell. Through all their music, and through all the clamour they make, the terrible song will reach them, everywhere they will hear the words, from the sound of which they will vainly try to flee. Everywhere it will pursue them, strong, and growing stronger from day to day, until all the land will be one outcry only, and one single mouth, from which the song pours forth, that promises deliverance:

"The International . . . unites the human race."

And this in itself is the second judgement: that through their madness and through their violation of the Holy German Reich, they have given such power to this song. Imagination cannot conceive what will follow, for all battles for countries, thrones and empires, which history has seen until now, will be as nothing compared to what our people will have to suffer. And so the few, who already know of the mission of Germany, who through the forest of grimacing Hakenkreuz flags and through the emerging streaks of the sea of red banners, discern the eternal and the sacred, the truly imperial black-red-gold standards, shining radiantly, will have to pray for tremendous power that they may be victorious.

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As in Germany have been committed the greatest sins conceivable in a community—those against freedom and justice, by the nation and by their single representatives—and as all powers have been awakened, which are alien to the human spirit, it will only be possible to create an inflexible and binding justice by the hands of him whom God and His own grace shall have girt for the combat.

## *Chapter XV*

### Further Outlook

**T**his book, which has dealt with the tragedy of the German people, draws now to its end, and readers may perhaps wish for a brief statement of the conclusions which I think should be deduced from the account here presented of what is happening in Germany.

There is first of all the theory that is reflected again and again from all its pages—that National Socialism in itself is unfit to provide an administration which would be conformable to the requirements of the country or to the needs of Europe. Neither do I think it possible that a thing which from the beginning has been without ideals can change with the mere passage of time into something good.

The underlying principle of the Hitler movement is a striving after absolute power for sheer power's sake, and this is to be remembered always by everyone who has dealings with Germany, for it will save him from falling under the illusion that National Socialism has so skilfully created. It is also to be remembered that although National Socialism may quite conceivably succeed in establishing itself permanently, there is no guarantee that along with

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stability would come the development of any forces that are positive; for in its very essence the movement is negative.

No-one should be discouraged because the swastika has attracted even millions of wholehearted adherents, the majority of whom have undoubtedly acted in good faith. It would be wrong to deny this—even more than that, it would be an injustice to the people of Germany, since it was only because many of them despaired of the Republic and of its weakness in dealing with affairs that they took the wrong road at last for the simple reason that no other was pointed out to them. Those, who in their confusion thus acted mistakenly, included some of the finest minds and characters in the country, and we believe that when the promise of better things is fulfilled these very men will have a considerable part to play in the new administration.

I have, while in England, repeatedly been asked whether there is in Germany any third possibility—besides Hitler and Communism. Yes, there is, and I have alluded to it more than once or twice in this book; I can, moreover, indicate more or less where it may be found, though I can give a fuller image of this “third possibility” only in my next book, which will probably be called “The Coming Reich”.

Our hope is in the men who still hold to the Christian faith, the picked men of the former Reichsbanner Black-Red-Gold, along with the peasants in the Catholic South and West of Germany, who will be the chief upholders of the future Reich; though in

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the Protestant North also I can today see many possibilities.

The opposition of so many thousand Evangelical pastors, men worthy of all honour for their independence of spirit and for their love of truth, of which we heard a few months ago (November, 1933), is an important indication of what is happening there, and the possibility that this movement may grow and flourish does not altogether depend upon its manifestation in any set forms, though it must certainly depend upon whether the Church is able to compose its internal dissensions—the shallows, by the way, upon which the ship of National Socialism first ran aground.

As regards the Catholic Church, much of what is written in this book expresses the sorrowful disappointment of a Roman Catholic who had expected the German bishops to stand by the words which they had so bravely spoken before Hitler came into power.

I do not forget that the Church justifies each compact made with opponents who have come into power by quotation of the words: "The powers that be are ordained of God"; but seldom has the Catholic Church been in such danger as now. She should be on her guard and be watchful lest, after the inevitable end of the Third Reich, a movement should begin, Christian and Catholic in faith and practice, which yet will no longer be in a position to acknowledge the authority of the Vatican.

We were therefore overjoyed when we heard of the several speeches which the Archbishop of Munich,

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Cardinal Faulhaber, delivered on the Sundays of December 1933 and on Sunday 18 February 1934. He spoke, as is well known, about the antichristian doctrine of anti-Semitism, and he emphasized that not by a "German religion" and not by German blood, but by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ we have been redeemed. To go back to a "Nordic religion", he insisted, would mean to fall back into barbarism.

These speeches were the first and most important sign of opposition, and all true Christians ought to be grateful for them, since they showed that the Church is not willing to surrender the ideals of Christianity to the brutal force of antichristian or megalomaniac dictators.

I include these religious considerations in my summary because more than once I have stressed the point that the reconstruction of Germany is unthinkable if it be not supported by a strong religious impulse. If this should be lacking, it seems to me that the time would indeed come when one would seriously have to fear the establishment of a Communist Soviet Germany.

I have also often been asked whether there is anything that at present might be done for Germany by foreign countries, in the interests both of Europe as a whole and of the true Germany herself; and to this question there is only one answer. Though nothing must be granted to Hitler that was denied to Brüning and Stresemann, it should be made quite clear that all justifiable national wishes will be fulfilled when there is a German Government in power whose desire for



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peace and good understanding is genuine, and free from all ulterior motives. This I believe to be the best way of meeting the Communist peril; for it is a certain fact that many of Hitler's opponents in Germany today are Communists just because they are firmly convinced that it is the Soviet Union only, and not any of the Western democracies, which is prepared to support those who are struggling against National Socialism. This view is erroneous, of course—but the erroneous view is nevertheless widely held, and that is enough.

I have tried to give reasons for opposing National Socialism in all spheres—political and social, judicial, ethical and cultural—but I have refrained from expressing my opinions in any formal discussion of its status, being of opinion that formal discussions, however elaborately reasoned, convince nobody. It seemed more to the point, in the course of this essay, to give accounts of what is actually going on, with a sort of running comment as to how these things struck me as one of the representatives of the other Germany.

The Germany of the future which we envisage will include all social ranks and political parties, all races and peoples in the country, and its problems at home and abroad will be approached and solved in the spirit of justice and of freedom. I believe, furthermore, that this Germany of the future will have a monarchical head—even though the monarchy of the future will differ greatly in outward form from the dynastic monarchies of the past—and even now,

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while we wait for the fulfilment of the popular legends and prophecies about these things, there is a hidden Germany present in our midst even today, revealing itself in the hearts of many of us as a spiritual opportunity.

There is already a kind of "German Legion", which can claim for itself that it is not a mere voluntary association of individuals, but simply Germany herself. Some of the members live within the German frontiers, while others, who had to leave the country, count themselves as of it, so long as they undertake nothing which would add to their opposition to Hitler even the slightest opposition to the Fatherland.

This German Legion stands before the present-day outward appearance of Germany, hammering on her gates, and demanding admission; for it knows itself the rightful owner of a heritage and a realm which strange armies wrongfully hold in possession, nor will it rest until it has attained the spiritual mastery which is needed for the fulfilment of the German mission.

Since Germany belongs to the West, and is neither chauvinist nor narrowminded by nature, I am glad that this book appears in English, as I should be thankful for anything that may link the real Germany with the other nations of our circle of culture, or do anything to restore our power of united action for the mutual benefit of the several countries.

In this connection reference should be made to Austria, on which, throughout the past year, the interest of the whole world has been concentrated. She is the second purely German State in Europe,

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and her culture is as old as that of Germany herself, and for centuries she has formed the bulwark of the lands of the West against the East.

A mighty struggle is taking place in little Austria, on whose soil National Socialism, beset by troubles at home, hopes to achieve victories which may bring credit and rehabilitation in the eyes of the world. If National Socialism should be compelled for a time to call a sort of truce with Austria, even enter into new friendly relations with her, on principle it cannot give up its exertions for the achievement of its ultimate aims, and from this point of view the Austrian problem widens out into something that vitally concerns the whole of Europe—something that I can express only as follows:

Austria is the key to the gate behind which stretches the new Europe; and just because a bridge-head sometimes proves as important in war time as an entire front line elsewhere hundreds of miles in length, one of the purposes with which this book is written is to urge that all the nations of Europe must unite in order to ensure the independence of Austria.

It is not enough only to utter conventional words of friendship in answer to any approaches that may be made by Austria. It is above all things important to contract commercial agreements with her, so that her vital sources of supply can be perfected, and that she may have opportunity to overcome her internal social troubles. Experience shows that a country in which distress is on the wane is no suitable soil for National Socialism, which thrives only where na-

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tional and social discontent reigns, where it is able to appeal to the needs of the masses and where it can exhibit its own aims to them as a sort of panacea for their sufferings.

One cannot at the present moment even begin to guess at the external forms by which the overthrow of National Socialism will be accomplished; and even where there seem to be possible tendencies we have mentioned them in this book only in cases where they are widely manifested.

If I were to go on to outline other sources of opposition besides the treatment of religious matters by National Socialism, I should first of all remind my readers of the remarkable variance between the National Socialist promises of social jurisdiction and the way in which those promises have not and cannot be fulfilled. If promises are made in one matter, and then are broken, we are naturally inclined to be doubtful when assurances are offered from the same quarter as to any other important matter.

To speak for a moment of the stormtroopers. As a matter of fact these stormtroopers are not entirely uniform among themselves; for they have enrolled many who prior to the Hitler Government had nothing in common with National Socialism. In its ranks are numbered tens of thousands, if not a hundred thousand, who would willingly, if they had the opportunity, throw in their lots with a policy that differed utterly from the present official one. Quite lately I have received reports as to the serious discontent in the proletarian ranks of the storm-

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troopers. They want bread and money, they want fulfilment of the promises made to them about their household arrangements; and some of the results of this disillusionment help also to explain the many changes made in Germany during the spring and summer of 1933.

Men who for a year had constantly been told that "if the worst came to the worst" they must just do what they thought was best at the moment, could not easily grasp why in their desperate need they had not the right to appropriate other people's property, to plunder flats and shops and houses, or even to smash or burn objects they found which yet to them were worthless. This was the real reason why Hitler in the summer of 1933 had suddenly to declare the "National Revolution" at an end, for by that time those who were behind him had gradually grown afraid of the forces which they had called up.

We see then that Germany presents at this time no example of a land united and justly ruled throughout, which might even be a pattern for other countries to follow by the adoption of National Socialism. This is particularly to be noted in view of the following question that was once put to me in England:

"After the Russian Revolution the advocates of the anti-Communist régime thought that Communism would last only a few months; and we heard the same from the Italian anti-Fascists in regard to Fascism. Why should it be different with the German National Socialism?"

As a matter of fact things are entirely different

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in Germany. Russia is an exceedingly vast area, in which it is practically impossible to prepare an opposition to the existing régime; and, besides this, Russian Communism depends on the masses of workers and peasants to whom, in comparison of their life under Tsarist rule, it has brought comparative freedom.

Italian Fascism also is able, as we have already tried to show, to accept a new idea which is offered to people who live in a country fortunate for its productiveness.

To National Socialism on the other hand none of these statements apply, since it has neither re-organized the social conditions, nor been able to satisfy national aspiration.

The rest of Europe therefore will do well to make up their minds speedily as to what is to happen after Hitler. The more speedily they do this and the fewer opportunities they afford to National Socialism to consolidate itself, the better for Germany and for the whole of Europe, for it would be fatal if Germany should come to be regarded as altogether and for ever separated and apart from other European States.

To the many failures of the Republic, about which we have spoken in this book, one final failure must here be added in conclusion: The Republic and its supporters have, from the first, conducted themselves, as regards the body of the German army (*Reichswehr*), with extreme imprudence. It was actually boycotted by the Social Democratic party: it was regarded as dishonourable and treacherous even

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to hold conversations with the members of the Reichswehr ministry. No one knows the reason for this. Yet in spite of everything there was a considerable number of black-red-gold Reichswehr supporters, and where they and the loyalty of the army were concerned there was really no occasion to fear for the constitution.

One cannot be surprised that this attitude of certain circles in the Republic alienated the Reichswehr, driving it towards the Right, for it thought thus to see its own position better assured. Not as if it had wished to establish Reichswehr rule—things are not as simple as that. The body of the Reichswehr, as a small picked army, had always had to a much greater extent the feeling that it represented a considerable union, which above all things should keep clear of all party politics.

How favourable and creative this could have proved itself for the destiny of the united nation, and how far removed it was from all former conceptions of an ordinary military dictatorship, was seen during the short administration of General von Schleicher.

A very great deal has to be done to bring about the overthrow of National Socialism, and for the moment we cannot yet see how, as a separate event, that overthrow is to be brought about, though high hopes can centre now, as always, on the eternal idea of the German Reich. The wounds which must be healed, the renewed hatred and the dissension cannot be estimated. Even though the work which lies before us is so large, we are in no sort of doubt that it will

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some day be accomplished. We know that the united goodwill of Europe is ours, as indeed the aim which is to be realized should guarantee for the struggle the greatest possible measure of help from all sides.

Therefore we trust in the divine Providence, that one day what we now attempt alone will be undertaken by the whole nation and by every man, so that a truly Holy Reich may consolidate, in freedom and brotherhood, the laws and customs of our historic land, and thus complete that destined work which Nature has left to Man.















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